

# THIS QUARTER

*Edited & Published by EDWARD W. TITUS*

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*Printed in France.*

# THIS QUARTER

December

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## EDITORIALLY :

### The Heinemann Fifty Guinea Award

We have the pleasure of announcing that Messrs. William Heinemann, Ltd., have made their Fifty Guinea Award. As we have stated on the back of the cover of our last four issues, this award goes to the author of one among the short stories by living British writers published in *THIS QUARTER* during 1932. We quote from our editorial announcement of last March :

For this award " we have to thank the generosity of the English publishers who distribute our periodical in the United Kingdom and the British Dominions. We refer, of course, to Messrs. William Heinemann, Ltd.

" Wishing to increase still further the interest which our publication of *THIS QUARTER* has attracted in England and the British Dominions, and also to assist in the keeping up of the admittedly high quality of the fiction we have been publishing, Messrs. Heinemann generously proposed to award *a sum of fifty guineas* to the author of one of the short stories by living British subjects which will appear in these pages during 1932. Needless to say, this offer we enthusiastically accepted.

" We shall not make the invidious assertion that the short story in question will be the *best* short story by an English writer which we shall have published during this

## EDITORIALY

year. But it will be the short story by an English writer which the following Committee will consider deserving of the award :

“ Mr. W. Somerset Maugham,  
“ Mr. A. S. Frere-Reeves, of Messrs. William  
Heinemann, Ltd., and  
“ the Editor of *THIS QUARTER*.”

There have been thirteen stories eligible for the Award, five having appeared in our March number, three in our June number, and five appearing in this present number. The September number of *THIS QUARTER*, being entirely devoted to Surrealism, contained no stories by living British subjects. The titles and authors of the thirteen stories as follows :

In *THIS QUARTER* for March :

*Black Velvet* by Charles Beadle  
*The Returned* by Neville Brand  
*Episode in 1930* by Rupert Croft-Cooke  
*Across the Heath* by Leslie Reid  
*The Death Watch* by Isabel Wyatt

In *THIS QUARTER* for June :

*The Harlot's Progress* by John Hampson  
*Flannel Feet* by Rowland Kenney  
*The Key* by Oliver Warner

In the present number :

*The Eyes* by T. O. Beachcroft  
*Bad Business* by Neville Brand  
*Dante and the Lobster* by Samuel Beckett  
*The Priest's Housekeeper* by J. P. Hogan  
*Sweetman* by Alfred H. Mendes

The Committee has decided that the Award shall be made to

**Mr. Leslie Reid**

for his story *Across the Heath*, which we published last March.

He has been sent a cheque for fifty guineas.



## EDITORIALLY

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*Der Staatsmann muss seinen Unternehmungen  
ein gutes Gewissen vorhängen und braucht dazu  
die begeisterten Ehrlichen und noch mehr die,  
welche so zu scheinen vermögen.*

NIETZSCHE.

*L'imprévoyant est moins accablé et démonté  
par l'événement catastrophique que le prévoyant.*

PAUL VALÉRY.

**WAR** Wars are made, but peace, like the poet, *nasci-*  
**&** *tur non fit.* And it passeth understanding. Its  
**PEACE** gestation is slow, and the whole world has been  
made wretched by the delusion that a Caesarean  
cut could bring it forth more certainly.

There is nothing subtle about war. The crudest mind can plunge a nation, plunge the world, into a devastating conflict. Only the finest, the most sensitive minds can usher in a peace. Those who alone contribute to the triumphs of mankind and without whom the world's status would still be that of the jungle—the poet, the sculptor and painter, the philosopher, the scientist, the merchant, the farmer, the mechanic, the builder and the day labourer—these must have peace in order to carry on their multifarious tasks. Yet should you examine the several pages, *in folio*, which preface the Treaty of Versailles and recite the names of the representatives of the High Contracting Parties, you would not find among the signatories a single delegate from the ranks we have mentioned at random. That, we believe, accounts for much of the mess. Had these been in at the death, could the mess have been worse?

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**LOOKING IN** If it had been possible to capitalize the  
**ON GENEVA** world-wide publicity which the League  
of Nations has been enjoying and with  
the proceeds to re-line the empty pockets now outnumbering the stars in heaven, the economic crisis would long since have been a thing of the past. The League is without question the most successfully press-agented institution on record. It managed, at all events, to “sell” itself to this Editor to the extent of rousing in him the desire to sniff

## EDITORIALY

the altruistic international atmosphere he imagined was circumfusing Geneva.

Far be it from us to speak disdainfully. The cradle-thought back of the machinery erected for the maintenance of universal peace, the ideal it was its avowed holy purpose to realize throughout the ravaged world, was the heralded culmination of united civilized effort. Disdain would therefore be out of place. But the most sincerely intended reserve is apt to kick over the traces as one watches, bemused at times, but more often disconsolate, the delegations of countries only recently emerged from the shell; and there come to mind Coleridge's lines :

*"dignity and power,  
Engulfed in Courts, Committees, Institutions,  
Associations and Societies,  
A vain, speech-mouthing, speech-reporting Guild,  
One Benefit-Club for mutual flattery."*

Bemused and disconsolate, one watches the manipulators, spokesmen, pullers of strings, histrions, hangers-on, and, as it were in a side-show, cranks of every shade and variety, rushing about, with their eternal despatch cases or bulging *serviettes*, through the lobbies of Geneva's bee-busy hotels, on more or less muddled, more or less mysterious errands. The burden of Atlas must have been feather-light compared to theirs, and the implacable labour of Sisyphus the glibbest legerdemain—, so one would judge from the unmitigated stress and strain read upon their faces.

Illumination, passion—as of the mystic or the sincerely innocent—is relievingly discernible in the eyes of many of the women who, in one capacity or other, are active in and about the League of Nations and its many ramifications. The spiritual element which, as some cynically maintain, hampers and afflicts the League's operations is in the main found amongst these women enthusiasts.

The wives and women friends of the delegates or of the Diplomatic Corps are responsible for such rewards as social functions may yield in garnishing and spicing an otherwise tedious routine. There is of course available a quota of female camp-followers, as is no more than usual and, it is said, necessary, when a great number of healthy and more or less moneyed men are brought together. They

## EDITORIALLY

provide venal comfort, much to the disgust and indignation of the Calvinist consciences of the natives of Geneva.

But whatever may be said carpingly of the League of Nations, this one thing must be said in its favour, that it proves of educational value occasionally. At dinner one evening we could not help overhearing what was being said at a table next to ours. It was occupied by an Englishman, a prosperous man of the law in appearance, who, as we gathered from the conversation, was a member of the British delegation; his wife, a Scotswoman; and their two guests, husband and wife, who were Genevese. When the *maitre d'hôtel* produced the inevitable wine list, the husband politely turned it over to his wife with the remark: "You choose the wine, dear." The lady cast her eye over the names and ordered a bottle of *Johannisberger*. "You know"—this to the guests—"until I came to Geneva I always thought *Johannisberger* was a South African wine and that I was buying British whenever I ordered it." This avowal was made with a condescension the charm of which was (unpunningly) disarming.

The lady was a member of the committee, or whatever the official name may be, on the Nationality of Women, Familiarity with the Nationality of Wines had come only after her introduction to Geneva. Let the League receive due credit.

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**PALL OF CALVINISM** Geneva is without question one of the most beautiful cities we know, but the pall of Calvinism hanging heavily over its intellectual, social and moral life does not strike us as particularly favourable to an untrammelled, unprejudiced, expansive and indulgent state of mind such as would seem prerequisite to the carrying on of a business like the League's. Paris, New York or Naples—any one of these would have been better. To Vienna, the League would have been a godsend. The ideal city, we insist, however, would be Paris—politically, socially and in every other way. It might, perhaps, not have pleased the Germans, and yet, perhaps, it might, for the precise reason that one might have thought it would not. In point of fact, the Germans love Paris so much that they staked their all to take it. But, seriously, we still have to



## EDITORIALY

meet the German who has not fallen in love with Paris at first sight. Anyway, the Germans stay away from Geneva when it does not please them to be there.

Moreover, against Geneva there lies the fact that it is the most expensive European city in our experience. Even our favourite, if modest and plebeian, *choucroûte garnie*, consumed in a third-rate Genevan *brasserie*, cost us more than twice what we pay for it in the much higher grade restaurant we patronize in Paris. No wonder the operating expenses of the League are a source of discontent and embarrassment. Several subordinate members of the Diplomatic Corps complained to us that they could not make ends meet. The Americans certainly are not poorer-salaried than others, and yet one of the American delegation was much distressed because the "boss" had ordered him to live at one of the better hotels and he "simply could not stand the racket."

This question of expense may however be only a matter of luck, or of knowing your way about. For instance, the Polish delegation gave a marvellous *soirée*, at which more than nine hundred persons were luxuriously entertained. The Poles are noted for their hospitality. By the wealth of food and drink dispensed at the function, we have been convinced that our teacher of history was an *ignoramus*. Lucullus was certainly a Pole, not a Roman. The Poles have brought before the League a pet scheme which they call "moral disarmament." Not a bad idea—such a *soirée*! When you have increased your antagonist's girth and got him under the table to boot, you have him pretty well disarmed, morally and in every other way. No sub-tabular casualties were reported.

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### WILSON A REVOLUTIONARY

It cannot be blinked that dissatisfaction with the workings of the League of Nations is widespread. But in the opinions aired on all sides, in the discussions deploring the League's infirmities, it seems to be lost sight of that the Covenant was not written by knights-errant, but by conquerors.

Only the French and their friends on the League do not



## EDITORIALY

forget that the Covenant was drafted, not as a separate and independent instrument, but as an essential part and parcel of the Treaty of Peace. The implications are closely interwoven, and if an undivided reading of the document inescapably forces this view upon an unclouded, unsentimental mind, then there is no point in being finically critical about it.

But another much more important factor is entirely overlooked. That factor is that the Covenant was essentially a revolutionary act. As such, its execution and enforcement by men of an abolitionist, revolutionary, dictator stamp of mind would have been rapid, for good or ill. Left in the hands of governments, the result could not have been other than it is. Government is the fatal antithesis of revolution. Hence it is that when revolutionary movements crystallize into organized government, they cease to be revolutionary. To whatever extent Woodrow Wilson was the originator of the Covenant, to that extent he was a revolutionary. It is enough to say that he was a government functionary for the corollary to follow that he could not but be conservative or reactionary. No man born of woman has thus far succeeded in sitting on both stools at the same time. Had Wilson, the revolutionary, untrammelled by government associations, succeeded in surrounding himself with a requisite group of like-minded revolutionaries of other countries and, together with them, wrested the power necessary for the setting up of the machinery—not to say the super-government so offensive to national pride—for the new order; and had that federated dictatorship, after the accomplishment of its task, turned the machinery over to the various national governments leagued together for the adequately defined administration of the enterprise, who knows but what we might be living in the fullest enjoyment of world tranquillity to-day. But Wilson was that androgynous organism, an ineffectual revolutionary-reactionary. The omelette remained uncooked, because the eggs had to be spared. Bagehot speaks somewhere of "*revolutionary reserve*." The Covenant was sped on its ways with much reserve and no revolution. Wilson had been a distinguished teacher of government, which is not the same as a teacher of Governments. Governments sometime learn, but they cannot be taught ; they can only be overthrown.

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## EDITORIALLY

**RIGHT OF SECESSION AN ERROR** Permitting speculation to inveigle us a step further—the chances of any reasonable permanence of the new order, even if operatively established and conditioned by such an unexampled union of super-personalities, would have been much restricted, if condemned to function within the precise clauses laid down for it in the Covenant. In order to insure against that, a leaf should have been taken from the American system, and a provision have been embodied to guard the League against disintegration by the secession of any members. Not only has such a safeguard not been provided, but there is the reactionary, and therefore thwarting, stipulation—of which several Powers have since availed themselves—expressly granting members the right of withdrawal from the League; and thereby are embedded in the Covenant the seeds of its own frustration. The reason no doubt was that holiest of holies, the sovereignty of the State, as if that can be greater than the sovereignty of man, himself the State's creator.

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**GOING DEEPER INTO IT** An instrument contrived for the world's salvation and the appeasement of men, one that could obey only the virtuosi of the spirit—prophets, great commanders or reformers, themselves alone capable of that renunciation the wisdom of which it was to have proclaimed to nations—this precious instrument has, instead, been placed in the sclerotic hands of government officials. The most sincere, upright, high-minded, well-meaning, no doubt, that could be found, but government officials, who, crowned as they may be with every virtue, are yet always ready to accuse the world when their enterprises go awry.

It cannot even be said that these officials are fiddling frivolously while the world expires at their feet. From their inside pockets they produce their carefully-laid pet plans and schemes and projects, and they talk and haggle and compromise. And it is not they who are to blame. It is the office holding them in thrall.

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## EDITORIALY

**DOPPELGÄNGEREI** And there is nothing new about all that.

**OF**  
**OFFICE HOLDERS** During the momentous Conventional debates of 1787 in Philadelphia, when that other Covenant was being hammered out which was to be the foundation of the United States of America, Elbridge Gerry, the delegate from Massachusetts, lamented that instead of coming there like a band of brothers, the delegates "seem to have brought with them the spirit of political negotiators."

Take them by and large—the men at Geneva—divest them of their insignia of government servants and you will find them men of wit, thinkers, poets, lovers of the arts, good judges of a painting, of books, of music; good spinners of yarns, tellers of jokes; good eaters, good drinkers, and good lovers; brimful of sympathy and compassion, scrupulously honest. Restore the government label, and you find yourself gazing into the blank face of a "political negotiator."

What is the curse cast on State and government that produces such *Doppelgängerei*?

One might say—appropriating the phrase recently used by Drieu La Rochelle, the French novelist, in an address to a German audience—that the good men and true are simply carrying on the "*métier de patrie*," but that would only be begging the question.

We are inclined to think rather that there is still something in the view of Gouverneur Morris, when, in a speech during the Conventional debates in Philadelphia we have just mentioned, he said: "Life and liberty were generally said to be of more value than property. An accurate view of the matter would nevertheless prove that property was the main object of Society." Yes, it would seem that government representatives, as such, become mesmerized, awed and appalled by the vastness of the material interests at stake.

But Gouverneur Morris went on to say: "The savage State was more favourable to liberty than the Civilized; and sufficiently so to life. It was preferred by all men who had acquired a taste for property; it was only renounced for the sake of property which could only be secured by the restraints of regular Government."

With this second quotation we reach an impasse.



## EDITORIALLY

Times and government appetites have much changed since Gouverneur Morris spoke. If at one period the civilized state was superior to the savage, because the protector of property, today it is property which is driven to seek refuge from the State's voracity. While capitalist governments still leave a mite, the Soviet Government takes all, and life and liberty to boot. Given a chance, it would take merry G. B. Shaw's, fond of it as he is and of doing lip and pen service in its behalf. But, ready enough to trust his valuable life and liberty within the Soviet's frontiers, he did not—we vow—go there laden with his goods and chattels. Those even he would not have risked.

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**EARNESTNESS OF SOVIETS** However much good faith and honesty of purpose there may be back of the efforts exercised in the interest of universal disarmament—though, for the life of us, we are unable to fathom how the disbanding of armies can do aught but furiously augment the already overflowing ranks of the unemployed in all countries, a fate inevitably bound to befall also the legions of workers who earn their daily bread in and about the manufacture of armaments if this manufacture is curtailed in any considerable degree—it is certainly not for any altruistic, but for purely material, reasons that the Soviet Government is perhaps of all governments the most anxiously and intimately interested in seeing disarmament occur. A great—how great, the Soviet authorities themselves probably are unable to estimate—proportion of Russian wealth is being sunk in the provision and the upkeep of an army and weapons of war. If cessation of that drain could be brought about, the Soviet coffers would be saved from threatening depletion—a depletion more catastrophic for Russia than for a capitalist State. Being pretty much the sole owner of all the tangible wealth in the country, once the coffers yawned empty, the Soviet would be at the end of its tether. Already fetchers and carriers have been reduced to the threadbare. They can furnish no further sinews. Thus, then the débâcle would be complete.

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## EDITORIALLY

We came away from Geneva in no optimistic mood, much as we tried. We came away unable to shake off the thought that governments have not advanced the race. Instituted to foster "the pursuit of happiness," they have precipitated mankind into a vale of tears. Conferences flounder out of one doldrums into another.



### *FOLLOWING BENJAMIN FRANKLIN*

We are reminded of Benjamin Franklin who, old and life-weary, was sitting in on the debates in the Constitutional Convention—we must ask the reader's indulgence for again referring to that historic event, but immersing ourselves recently in the study of certain side-lights on the subject, we are rather brimful with it at the moment—when no further headway seemed possible, he, probably the most enlightened of all the delegates present, moved "that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the Clergy of this City be requested to officiate in that service."

What a rare spectacle it would have been to see, say, that other marvellous and amiable sophisticate, the late lamented Aristide Briand, who indeed shared many of Franklin's characteristics, perhaps after putting aside his cigarette, mount the podium and, with an air of great solemnity, appeal to Heaven for guidance in perplexity!

Is it necessary to add that the Philadelphia Assembly thought it wise not to put Franklin's motion to a vote, but to move and vote affirmatively for adjournment instead?

E. W. T.

## SAMUEL BECKETT

### DANTE AND THE LOBSTER

Belacqua was stuck half-way through the first of the great Moon Canti. He was bogged, and could not get on. Blissful Beatrice was there, and Dante, and she explained the spots on the moon to him. First she showed him where he was at fault, then she put up her own explanation. She had it from God, so he could rely on its being accurate in every particular. It was only a question of following the argument, step by step. The first part, the refutation, was straightforward. She made her point clearly, she said what she had to say without fuss and without loss of time. But the second part, the demonstration, was so complicated and up in the air that Belacqua could not make head or tail of it. The disproof, the reproof—that was neat, fleet and lucid. But then came the proof—a dense, involved showing forth of the real facts of the case; and Belacqua was bogged. Also, he was bored. He was in a great hurry to get on to Piccarda. Still, he pored over the enigma, resolved not to give in just yet, stiffly resolved to understand at least the meaning of the words, and the order in which they were spoken, and the nature of the satisfaction that they conferred on the misinformed poet, so that when they were ended he was refreshed and raised his heavy head, intending to return thanks and make formal retraction of his old opinion.

Belacqua was still running his brain against this



SAMUEL BECKETT

impenetrable passage when he heard midday strike. He switched his mind off its task at once. He scooped his fingers under the book and shovelled it back till it lay wholly on his palms. The *Divine Comedy* face upwards on the lectern of his palms. Thus disposed, he raised it under his nose. There he slammed it shut as hard as he could. He held it aloft for a moment, squinting at it angrily, pressing the boards inwards with the heels of his hands. Then he laid it to one side.

He leaned back in the chair to feel his mind going slack and quiet and dim. He waited for the itch of this mean quodlibet to die down, for his mind to get better. Gradually it got better. As soon as he felt it would be all right to risk it, he began cautiously to consider what he had to do next. There was always something that one had to do next. Three large obligations presented themselves. First luncheon, then the lobster, then the Italian lesson. That would do to be going on with. After the Italian lesson, he had no very clear idea. No doubt, some niggling curriculum had been drawn up by some one for the late afternoon and evening. But he did not know what it was. In any case, it did not matter. What did matter was : one, luncheon; two, the lobster; three, the Italian lesson. His mind was tired, it could not be bothered carrying him beyond the lesson. That was more than enough to be going on with.

Luncheon, if it was to be any kind of a success, was a most finical affair. The first great article of a successful luncheon required that he should he left in absolute tranquillity to prepare it. If he were disturbed now, if some brisk tattler were to come bouncing in now, big with a big idea or a petition, then he might just as well forgo his luncheon, because it would turn to gall against his palate or, worse

still, taste of nothing whatever. He must be left strictly alone, he must have complete quiet and privacy, to prepare the food for his luncheon.

He rose and locked the door. Now nobody could get at him if he did not choose to let them. He deployed an old *Herald* and smoothed it out on the table. The rather handsome face of McCabe the Assassin stared up at him. He lit the gas-ring. Next, he took down the square flat toaster, asbestos grill, from its nail and set it precisely on the flames. He lowered the gas. Toast must on no account be done too rapidly. For a piece of bread to be toasted, as it should be, through and through, it must be done on mild, steady flames. Otherwise, you only succeeded in charring the outsides and the pith was as sodden in the end as in the beginning. If there was one thing he abominated more than another, it was to feel his fangs break through the splendid hard crust of toast into a yielding zone of pith and dough. And it was so easy to do the thing properly. So he thought, having regulated the flow of gas and adjusted the grill, "By the time I have the bread cut that will be just right." Now the long toast-loaf came out of its biscuit-tin on to the *Herald* and had its end evened off on the face of McCabe. Two bold, inexorable drives with the keen bread-saw, and a pair of neat slabs of raw bread, the main elements of his luncheon, lay before him, awaiting his pleasure. The stump of the loaf went back into prison, the crumbs, as though there were no such thing as a sparrow in the world, were swept impatiently away, and the slices snatched up and brought over to the grill.

This was where real skill began to be required. This was where the average person began to make a hash of the entire proceedings. He tested the marrow of the bread against his cheek. It was spongy and warm—alive. But he would very soon take that plush

feel off it, by God ! but he would very soon take that plump white look off its face. He lowered the gas just a suspicion and plaqued one flabby slab down on the glowing fabric, but very pat and precise, so that the whole presented the appearance of a diamond and square with common centre. Then on top, because there was not room for both slices to toast evenly side by side, and if you did not do them evenly you might just as well save yourself the trouble of doing them at all, the other slice was set to warm. When the first candidate was done, which was not until its entire superficial area was black with an immaculate uniform blackness, it changed places with its comrade, so that now it in its turn lay on top, done to a turn, *à point*, black and smoking, waiting till as much could be said for the other.

For the tiller of the field the thing was simple—he had it from his mother. The spots were Cain with his truss of thorns, dispossessed, cursed from the earth, fugitive and vagabond. The moon was that countenance fallen and branded, seared with the first stigma of God's pity, that an outcast might not die quickly. It was a mix-up in the mind of the tiller, but that did not matter. It had been good enough for his mother; it was good enough for him.

Belacqua, on his knees before the flames, poring over the grill, controlled every phase of the broiling. It took time, but if a thing was worth doing at all it was worth doing well. That was a true saying. Long before it was over, the room was full of smoke and the smell of burning. When both slices were quite done, according to his God, he switched off the gas and restored the toaster to its lawful place against the wall. This was an act of dilapidation, for it seared a great weal in the paper. It was a vicious piece of hooliganism. What the hell did he care ? Was it his wall ? The same hopeless paper had been



*SAMUEL BECKETT*

there fifty years. It was livid with age. It could not be disimproved.

Next, a thick paste of salt, Savora, and Cayenne pepper on each slice, well worked in while the pores were still open with the heat. No butter, God forbid! Just a good compress of salt and pepper and mustard on each slice. Butter was a terrible mistake, it made the toast soggy. Hot buttered toast was only fit for Senior Fellows and the Salvation Army, people with nothing but false teeth in their heads. It was no good at all to a strong young rose like Belacqua. This meal that he was at such pains to make ready, he would devour it with a sense of rapture and victory, it would be like smiting the sledged Polaks on the ice. He would snap at it with closed eyes, he would gnash it into a pulp, he would vanquish it utterly with his fangs. Then the anguish of pungency, the pang of the spices, as each mouthful died, scorching his palate, bringing tears.

But he had not finished yet. There was still much to be done. He had burnt his offering, but he had not fully dressed it.

He clapped the toasted slices together, he brought them smartly together like cymbals, they clave the one to the other on the viscid salve of Savora. Then he wrapped them up for the time being in any old sheet of paper. Then he made himself ready for the road.

Now the great thing was to avoid being accosted. To be stopped at this stage and have conversational nuisance committed all over him would be a disaster. His whole being was strained forward towards the joy in store. If he were accosted now he might just as well fling his luncheon into the gutter and walk straight back home. Sometimes his hunger—obviously more of mind than of body—for this meal amounted to such a frenzy that he would not have

*SAMUEL BECKETT*

hesitated to strike any man rash enough to button-hole and baulk him, he would have shouldered him out of his path without ceremony. Woe betide the meddler who crossed him when his mind was really set on this meal !

He threaded his way rapidly, his head bowed, through a familiar labyrinth of lanes, and suddenly dived into a little family grocery. In the shop, they were not surprised. On most days, about this hour, he shot in off the street in this way.

The slab of cheese was prepared. Separated since morning from the piece, it was waiting for Belacqua to call and take it. Gorgonzola. He knew where to look for it. Every day it was there, in the same corner, waiting to be called for. They were very decent, obliging people.

He looked sceptically at the cut of cheese. He turned it over to see was the other side any better. The other side was worse. They had laid it better side up; they had practised that little deception. Who shall blame them ? He palped it. It was sweating. That was something. He stooped and smelt it. A faint fragrance of corruption. What good was that to him ? He didn't want fragrance, he wasn't a bloody gourmet, he wanted a good stench. What he wanted was a good green stenching rotten lump of Gorgonzola cheese—alive. And he meant to get it.

He looked fiercely at the grocer.

"What's that ?" he demanded.

The grocer writhed.

"Well ?" demanded Belacqua. He was without fear when roused. "Is that the best you can do ?"

"You won't find," said the grocer, "a finer greener little bit of Gorgon in the length and breadth of Dublin this minute."

SAMUEL BECKETT

Belacqua was furious. The impudent dogsbody ! For two pins he would assault him.

"It won't do !" he cried. "Do you hear me ? It won't do at all. I won't have it." He clenched his fists.

The grocer, instead of simply washing his hands like Pilate, flung out his arms in a wild crucified gesture of supplication. Sullenly, Belacqua undid his packet. Sullenly, he slipped the cadaverous tablet of cheese between the hard, cold, black boards of the toast. He did up his packet and stumped to the door. At the door he whirled round.

"You heard me ?" he cried.

"Sir," said the grocer. This was not a question. Nor an expression of acquiescence. The tone in which it was let fall made it quite impossible to know what was in the man's mind. It was a most ingenious riposte.

"I tell you," said Belacqua, with great heat, "that this won't do at all. If you can't do better than this"—he threw forward the hand that held the packet—"I shall be obliged to go for my cheese elsewhere. Do you hear me ?"

"Sir," said the grocer.

He came to the threshold of his little store and watched the indignant customer hobble away. Belacqua was gone in the feet, they were in ruins, he suffered with them almost continuously. Even in the night they took no rest, or next to none. For then the cramps took over from the corns and hammer-toes, and carried on. So that he would press the fringes of his toes desperately against the end-rail of the bed or, better still, reach forward with his hand and drag them up and back towards the instep. Skill and patience could dispel the pain—but there it was, invading his night's rest.



SAMUEL BECKETT

The grocer, without closing his eyes or taking them off the diminishing figure, blew his nose in the skirt of his apron. He was a warm-hearted human man, and felt sympathy and pity for this queer customer who always looked ill and dejected. But at the same time he was a small tradesman—that must not be forgotten—with a small tradesman's sense of personal dignity and what was business. Thruppence, he cast it up, thruppence worth of cheese per day, one and a tanner per week. He would fawn on no man for that sum, no, not for the best in the land. He had his pride.

Stumbling along by devious ways towards the lowly public where he was expected, in the sense that the entry of his grotesque person would provoke no comment or laughter, Belacqua gradually got the upper hand of his chagrin. Now that luncheon was as good as a *fait accompli*, because the incontinent bosthoons of his own class, itching to pass on a big idea or inflict an appointment, were seldom at large in this shabby quarter of the city, he was free to consider items 2 and 3—the lobster and the lesson—in closer detail.

At a quarter to three he was due at the School of Languages. Say five to three. The public closed, the fish-shop opened, at half-past two. Assuming then that his aunt had ordered the lobster in good time that morning, with strict injunctions that it should be ready and waiting, so that her nephew should on no account be delayed when he called for it first thing in the afternoon, it would be time enough if he left the public as it closed; he could remain on till the last moment. Good. He had half-a-crown. That was two pints of draught anyway, and perhaps a bottle to wind up with. Their stout in bottle was particularly excellent and well up. And he would still be left enough coppers for a *Herald*, and a tram

if he felt tired or was pinched for time. Always assuming, of course, that the lobster was all ready to be handed over. "God damn these tradesmen!" he thought; "you can never rely on them." He had not done an exercise, but that did not matter. His professoressa was so charming and remarkable. Signorina Adriana Ottolenghi! He did not believe it possible for a woman to be more intelligent or better informed than his professoressa, Signorina Ottolenghi. So he had set her on a pedestal in his mind, apart from other women. She had said last day that they would read *Il Cinque Maggio*. But she would not mind if he told her, as he proposed to, in Italian, he would frame a shining phrase on his way to her from the public, that he would prefer to leave the *Cinque Maggio* for another time. He did not feel like fake enthusiasm at the moment. Manzoni was an old woman, and Napoleon was another:

*Napoleone di mezza calzetta.  
Fa l'amore a Giacominetta.*

Why did he think of Manzoni as an old woman? Why did he do him that injustice? Pellico was another. They were all old maids, suffragettes! As for Carducci, he was an intolerable old bitch. He must ask his Signorina where he could have got that impression, that the nineteenth century in Italy was full of old hens, trying to cluck like Pindar. Also, about the spots on the moon. If she could not tell him there and then she would make it up, and gladly, against the next time. Everything was all set now and in order. Except, of course, the lobster, which had to remain an incalculable factor. He must just hope for the best. And expect the worst, he thought gaily, slipping into the public, as usual. . . .

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*SAMUEL BECKETT*

Belacqua drew near to the School of Languages, almost at peace with the world. Everything had gone swimmingly. The luncheon had turned out an immense success. It was a luncheon that would stick for many a day in his memory—a criterion. He did not see how it could well be improved on. He had been amazed by the strength of the cheese. Such a pale, soapy piece of cheese to be so potent ! He must only conclude that he had been abusing himself all these years in assuming the strength of cheese to be directly related to the greenness of its appearance. We live and learn—that was a very true saying. Never would he have believed it possible that such white Gorgonzola could taste so rotten. Then his teeth and jaws had won a splendid victory. Splinters of vanquished toast had sprayed from his mouth at each fierce bite. His mouth burned and ached with the exploit. Then the food had been further spiced by the intelligence, transmitted in a low tragic voice across the counter by Oliver the barman, that the Malahide murderer's petition for mercy, signed by half the land, had been rejected, and that he was to swing at dawn in Mountjoy. Nothing could save him now. Ellis the hangman was crossing over that very night. If anything was wanted to crown that exquisite gastronomical experience, it was just such a piece of news.

The lobster had been ready after all, the man had handed it over instantanè, and with such a pleasant smile ! Really, a little bit of courtesy and goodwill went a long way in this world. A smile and a cheery word from a common working-man, and the face of the world was brightened. And it was so easy, simply a question of muscular control.

“Lepping,” he had said cheerfully, handing it over.

"Lepping ?" said Belacqua. What on earth could he mean ?

"Lepping fresh, sir," said the man. "Fresh in this morning."

Now Belacqua, on the analogy of mackerel which he had heard described as "lepping fresh" when they had been taken but an hour or two previously, supposed him to mean that the lobster had very recently been killed.

Signorina Adriana Ottolenghi was waiting in the little front room off the hall. Belacqua was naturally rather inclined to think of it as the vestibule. That was her room, the Italian room. The French room was on the same side, but at the back of the house. God knows where the German room was. Who cared about the German room, anyway ?

He hung his coat and hat on the stand, laid the long, knobby, brown-paper parcel on the hall-table, and went prestly in to the Ottolenghi.

After about half-an-hour of this and that obiter, she complimented him on his grasp of the language :

"You make rapid progress," she said, in her white voice.

There subsisted of the Ottolenghi as much as might be expected to subsist of a lady of a certain age who had found being young and beautiful and pure more of a bore than otherwise.

Belacqua, dissembling his great pleasure, laid the Moon enigma before her. "Yes," she said, "I am familiar with the passage. It is well known for a teaser. Off hand I cannot tell you, but I will look it up when I go home."

The sweet creature ! She would look it up in her big Dante when she went home. What a woman !

"It occurred to me," she said, "apropos of I don't know what, that you might do well to make up Dante's rare movements of compassion in the



SAMUEL BECKETT

*Inferno.* That used to be"—her past tenses were always sorrowful—"a favourite question."

He assumed an expression of profundity.

"In that connexion," he said, "I recall one superb pun anyway—

*'qui vive la pietà quando è ben morta.'*"

She said nothing.

"Is it not a great phrase!" he gushed.

She said nothing.

"Now," he said, like a fool, "I wonder how you would translate that."

Still she said nothing. Then—

"Do you think," she murmured, "it is absolutely necessary to translate it?"

Sounds as of conflict were borne in from the hall. Then silence. Some one tambourined urgently on the door, it flew open, and lo! it was Mlle. Glain, the French teacher, clutching her cat, her eyes out on stalks, in a state of the greatest agitation.

"Oh!" she gasped, "excuse me, but what was in the bag?"

"The bag?" said Signorina Ottolenghi.

Mlle. Glain took a French step forward.

"The parcel," she buried her face in the cat, "the parcel on the hall-table. The cat has been at it."

Belacqua spoke up composedly.

"Mine," he said. "A fish." He did not know the French word for lobster. Fish would do very well. Fish had been good enough for Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour. It was good enough for Mlle. Glain.

"Oh!" said Mlle. Glain, inexpressibly relieved, "I caught him just in time, he would have torn it to flitters." She administered a tap to the cat.

Belacqua began to feel a little anxious.

SAMUEL BECKETT

"Did he actually get at it?" he said.

"No, no," said Mlle. Glain. "I caught him just in time. But I didn't know"—she giggled as only a blue-stockings can—"what it might be, so I thought I had better come and ask."

"Bitch," thought Belacqua, "base, prying bitch." Adriana was slightly amused.

"*Puisqu'il n'y a pas de mal*," she said.

"*Heureusement!*"—it was clear at once that Mlle. Glain was devout—"heureusement!" Chastening the cat with little skelps, she took herself off. The grey hairs of her maidenhead screamed at Belacqua. A devout, virginal blue-stockings, smelling after a penny's worth of scandal.

"Where were we?" said Belacqua.

But there are limits to Neapolitan patience.

"Where are we ever?" said Signorina Ottolenghi, violently, "where we were, as we were."

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Belacqua drew near to the house of his aunt. Let us call it winter, so that dusk may fall now and a moon rise. At the corner of her street, a horse was down and a man sat on its head. "I know," thought Belacqua, "that that is considered the right thing to do. But why?" A lamplighter flew past on his bicycle, tilting with his pole at the standards, jousting yellow light into the evening. A poorly dressed couple stood in the bay of a pretentious gate-way, she sagging against the railings, her head bowed, he standing facing her. He stood up close to her, his hands dangled by his sides. "Where we were," thought Belacqua, "as we were." He walked on, gripping his parcel tightly. "Why not piety and pity both," he wondered, "even in hell? Why not mercy and Godliness together? A little mercy in the stress of sacrifice, a little mercy to rejoice

against judgement." He thought of Jonah and the gourd and the pity of a jealous God on Nineveh. And poor McCabe, he would get it in the neck at dawn. What was he doing now, how was he feeling now? He would salt one more meal, one more night.

His aunt was in the garden, tending whatever flowers die at that time of year. She embraced him. Together they went down into the bowels of the earth, into the kitchen in the basement. She took the parcel and undid it, and behold! the red lobster was on the table, on the oilcloth, discovered.

"They assured me it was fresh," said Belacqua.

Suddenly he saw the creature move. Definitely, it changed its position. His hand flew to his mouth.

"Christ!" he said, "it's alive."

His aunt looked at the lobster. It moved again. It made a faint nervous act of life on the oilcloth. They stood above it, looking down on it, exposed cruciform on the oilcloth. Again it shuddered. Belacqua felt sick.

"My God!" he whimpered, "it's alive. What'll we do?"

His aunt simply had to laugh. She bustled off into the pantry for her smart apron, leaving him goggling down on the lobster, and came back with it on and her sleeves rolled up, all business.

"Well," she said, "it is to be hoped so indeed."

"All this time," muttered Belacqua "alive." Then, suddenly aware of her hideous equipment, "What are you going to do?" he cried.

"Boil the beast," said his aunt. "What else?"

"But it's not dead," protested Belacqua. "You can't boil it like that."

She looked at him in astonishment. Had he taken leave of his senses?

"Don't be so absurd," she said sharply. "Lobsters are always boiled alive. They have to be." She

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caught up the lobster and laid it on its back. It trembled. "They feel nothing," she said.

In the depths of the sea it had crept into the cruel pot. For hours, in the midst of its enemies, it had breathed secretly. It had survived the French-woman's cat and his witless clutch. Now it was going alive into scalding water. It had to. "Take into the air my quiet breath. . . ."

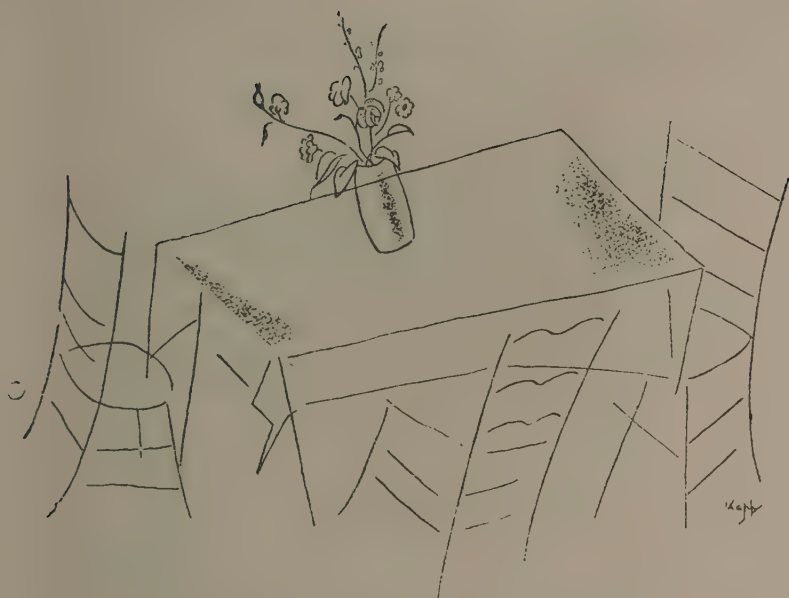
Belacqua looked at the old parchment of her face, grey in the dim kitchen.

"You make a fuss," she said angrily, "and upset me, and then lash into it for your dinner." She lifted the lobster clear of the table. It had about thirty seconds to live.

"Well," thought Belacqua, "it's a quick death, God help us all."

It is not.





"Every one suddenly burst out crying."

*Drawing by Edmond X. Kapp.*



## CHARLES WILLIAMS

### SHAKESPEARE AND BACON

#### A Scene from an Unpublished *Myth of Francis Bacon*

[The scene takes place in the court of the Palace in 1601 during the investigations into the Essex rebellion. Augustine Phillipps, the manager of the Chamberlain's men, was examined on the production of *Richard II*; that Shakespeare, the author, might also have had to be in attendance does not seem too bold a fancy. The first edition of Bacon's *Essays*, ten in number, was issued in 1597 and reprinted in 1598; Shakespeare was about this time producing the tragi-comedies.]

Augustine PHILLIPPS and SHAKESPEARE enter.

PHILLIPPS.

*This is the blesseddest day of all my life!  
I hardly thought to see the sun again.*

SHAKESPEARE.

*Richard's own dungeon won't be half as deep  
as the pit I'll hide that play in : all because  
my lord of Essex must be picturesque,  
but I'm not made for such benevolence  
to the poor thrifty boat-in-floodtime world.*

PHILLIPPS.

*All's safe : we've slipped the danger.*

SHAKESPEARE.

*Have we so ?*

*It makes me mad to think we ran so near;  
to think you let yourselves be gulled and bribed  
by his jerrymaking Gelly Merricks.*

PHILLIPPS.

*Will,*

*he offered us twice our pay, and—*

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SHAKESPEARE. *Easy fools,  
to let his Merricks thumb-and-finger you.  
Whenever I'm out of the theatre things go wrong.*

PHILLIPPS.  
*You'd have stood out; you'd have refused.*

SHAKESPEARE. *I am  
as good a gentlemen as Gellykins,  
and Gellykins should jelly in Little Ease  
before he took my coat of arms to wag  
over his lusty bombast. Bombast's place  
is on the stage, my friend; let's keep it there.*

PHILLIPPS.  
*At least our stage is ours; our verse is yours;  
we are the Chamberlain's men; but there be men,  
whom the Earl made, who now not merely slip  
as we do from his fall, but push him down.*

SHAKESPEARE.  
*Close tongue : 'ware slitting!*

PHILLIPPS. *Nay, but all men know  
that Bacon will denounce him at the trial.  
Why, the Earl set him on his stage.*

SHAKESPEARE. *Aye, aye!  
I am something weary of being helped by the world  
with so much picturesque generosity.*

PHILLIPPS.  
*You ? but I talk of Bacon.*

SHAKESPEARE. *So you do.  
I dream myself am Bacon at this pinch.  
Did you feel his Essays ?*

PHILLIPPS. *Feel his—?*

SHAKESPEARE. *Read them then ?  
But 'feel' 's the word. I couldn't think like that,  
twining and thrusting, measuring in and out  
with the very footrule of man's mind that God  
once plotted all earth's base with. The slow words—  
it's only that that stops me envying him.*

PHILLIPPS.  
*What stops you ? Envying him ? what do you mean ?*



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SHAKESPEARE.

*It's . . . it's all but . . . only it isn't quite. . . .  
That's what I mean. He's all but the perfect whole—  
nay, he's a whole that I shall never be.  
To have his power, his learning, his grand style—  
I'd give up everything except my own;  
not that. We are such perfect opposites  
we must be somewhere a strange unity.  
Well—I suppose I'd rather be my half.  
And—hist! it's Bacon.*

(BACON enters, with a Secretary.)

BACON.

*These to the copying clerks.  
This to the Secretary: this I'll keep.  
The examinations press him hard.*

THE SECRETARY.

*He's dead,  
if he can make no better at his trial. (He goes out.)*

BACON.

*Ha, sirs! at Court still? Well, you're going free.  
Take heed to what you play another time—  
or what you write, you poet.*

(PHILLIPS bows and goes.)

SHAKESPEARE.

*Truth, but verse  
teaches its maker more of its will than prose;  
that's why the greater minds choose prose. They know  
before they write it more of what they mean  
than we poor poetasters.*

BACON.

*Oracles  
dancing the inspiration!*

SHAKESPEARE.

*Neither so.  
But—don't your Essays teach men how to act—*

BACON.

*How now!*

SHAKESPEARE.

*May not a paltry poet have read  
and contemplated study's horizon?*

BACON.

*You—  
What, sir! you flatter!*

SHAKESPEARE.

*Can I flatter you  
or what your mind discerns or what it—serves?*

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BACON.

*What then ?*

SHAKESPEARE. *Less than perfected knowledge ?*

BACON.

*Known!*

*All known—all knowledgeable wonder brought  
into the edifice of the mortal mind.*

*The vault of worms, the skiey spire of stars,  
and all the involuting laws of each—  
the operation of the secret forms—  
man, man shall hold it soon.*

SHAKESPEARE.

*Sooner for you.*

BACON.

*You are the playwright Shakespeare, are you not ?*

SHAKESPEARE.

*For business' sake; somewhat for pleasure too.*

BACON.

*Because the actions and events of man  
are less by much than his desires, less great,  
heroical and potent, you draw up  
tales to delight his fiction of himself.*

*You must reduce the shows of things to be  
subordinate to man's longing : reason bows  
man's mind to things in their own nature ; what,  
my master-mummer, can reason mean to you ?*

SHAKESPEARE.

*Upon the shore, say—look, you there, I here!  
you judge the waves, you measure currents, plot  
the palpitating air in calm or storm:  
your exquisite pattern! your strong government! I  
build up a cameleopard from the sand  
wet from the ebb, blowing soft wind through it  
till the small image stretches, rises, talks,  
looms terribly leviathan, and therewith  
goes crunching from the pebbles such a sound  
as is your very pattern come to song.  
Shall you mock me or I mock you ? Brave hearts,  
at least we both whistled the wind ; it came,  
and the same salt is clustered on our beards.  
We are strangely separate and as strangely one.*

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BACON.

*What, fictions and witty prattle with that deep  
excellency of learning, whereby man  
all pleasures else surpasses, and ascends  
into the heavens, making their motions bare  
as his hand's palm to study: the supreme,  
immortal, incorruptible reason! Out!*

SHAKESPEARE.

*I could say that! I could say that! but you—  
O Master Bacon, could you take my word?  
You cannot; I am you; you are not I.  
You are the intellect that cannot love.*

(CECIL. ESSEX between his guards.)

CECIL.

*My lord, I dare not sound the Queen.*

ESSEX.

*One word;*

*Cecil, be wise: if I ride out this storm—  
you know the Queen—men that have slipped have stood  
as firm again. But give me speech with her.*

CECIL.

*My lord, I dare not name you to the Queen  
except her Highness open.*

ESSEX.

*Why, by chance—*

*have me by chance somewhere when she goes by—  
She loved me.*

CECIL.

*That is it. I think she thinks  
you never loved her back. Give you farewell.*

(ESSEX, stepping back, sees Bacon.)

ESSEX.

*Ha, Master Francis Bacon: save you now!  
You are another limb of this fair Court  
or are you other than the Francis once  
I talked great things with? you are he I plucked  
out of the gutter, fought with princes for,  
set on my right hand, would have dared to trust  
with my soul's honour?*

BACON.

*Did you?*

ESSEX.

*Were we friends?*

*You are among the dogs that bay me round  
against the granite wall that is the Queen.*

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CECIL.

*My lord, you do your cause no good—*

ESSEX.

*No good :*

*all the good that I ever meant is turned  
to the cold faces that look down on me :  
look, the Queen laughs and Francis Bacon sneers.*

BACON.

*My lord, I would not press a falling man,  
but by your honour and God's truth, I charge  
your truth with this remembrance—that I swore  
always and always I was first the Queen's.*

ESSEX.

*Aye—pretty, pretty. Then 'twas 'save the Queen'  
with an exceeding low and mincing voice;  
now 'save the Queen' with a great sounding roar  
that blows you right up o'er my head to sup  
—for all I know—in the Privy Chamber. Ha,  
this is your gratitude: you owe me naught,  
do you ?*

BACON.

*I owe you—*

ESSEX.

*fame and lands and place :  
your life, your very mind—*

BACON.

*No, by God's life.*

*I that was born for the service of mankind—  
I that have sought to serve the commonwealth  
as a man serves his mother, on his knees,  
with what poor art he can; and serving so  
might hope to win his mother's listening thoughts  
to let him on a voyage of great skill  
to—where ? some lost Atlantis. . .*

ESSEX.

*Lost! you lie.*

*The Queen shall hear, shall see, shall relish me.*

CECIL. (signing to the Guards) :

*Farewell, my lord. God send your lordship good.  
(He is carried off.)*

CECIL. (To BACON.)

*Cousin, the Queen's Grace bid me send for you.  
Sir Edward Coke will lead against the Earl;  
she chooses you to second.*

BACON.

*Second the Earl!*



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CECIL.

*You are merry, coz: second Sir Edward Coke  
in the prosecution. Come to me to-night.  
I shall show you certain secret things. Meanwhile,  
your answer?*

BACON.

*I am her Highness' creature; ever hers.*

CECIL.

*You do well; you were somewhat thought to be—  
what shall I say?—intimate with his thought—  
this readiness will purge you: you may look  
for recognition. Give you joy, good coz.*

*(He goes out.)*

BACON.

*I warned—a score of times I warned him. God  
knows I am free of all blood-guiltiness.  
I bade him keep from Ireland; I besought,  
nay, wrestled with him. I was never his  
but while—no longer—while he was the Queen's.*

SHAKESPEARE.

*You cannot move except against the Earl.  
And can you cease to move?*

BACON.

*I cease? withdraw?  
leave the State service? leave the greater thing  
whereto the State may serve?*

SHAKESPEARE.

*It cannot be.  
The incorruption and the corruption drive  
your feet at once; impurity—purity.*

BACON.

*He rose not in his service, and he took  
order to make his service fall with him.*

SHAKESPEARE.

*It is a dreadful thing—this purity  
that works within us; this most pregnant cold  
wherein the sense of all our senses lives,  
yet is repugnant to all outer sense,  
and overthrows it; happy if we still  
find that, losing the outer. But the men  
who love us, living in our outward sense,  
find us grown treacherous to them where they live.  
Witness the poor wretch babbling in the Tower.*

CHARLES WILLIAMS

BACON.

*The State is more than any score of Earls.*

SHAKESPEARE.

*Reason—good reason; the true reason lacks.*

*There's something in you never cared for him.*

BACON.

*I loved him.*

SHAKESPEARE. *Aye, as the incorruption loves.*

*'Tis the incorruption hath you: wait awhile—  
the incorruption shall have you nearer yet;*

*it shall divide you—sharp, sharp; flesh from bone,  
giving you but yourself to be your food.*

*The skeleton shall feed on living flesh  
when the day comes,*

*(He moves off.)*

*the day that does not end.*

*(He goes out, and BACON also departs.)*

## MARION WARD

### DARK POWER

Kenneth Woodbury stopped his tiny Citroën on the top of a hill and looked across the valley. The sinking sun was still a pale yellow disc among clouds of old rose and dull Roman gold, but already twilight was pouring down the low hills and slowly flowing across the green and yellow fields. A last ray dyed the three low arches of an ancient bridge a deep orange. The gold reflections in the water were the only bright colour left on the narrow, winding stream. Above and below, mist was rising between the tall straight poplars. Sheep bells tinkled in the distance as a black, bent figure hobbled after a flock along the river. In a village across the valley, the square church tower dropped seven deep notes into the twilight, significantly, unhurriedly. The last quivering gold line above the hills intensified, flickered and went out. The air was pungent with the damp smell of the earth. Kenneth released his brake and slid downhill.

Dr. Bernard had certainly been right. His nerves had been like violin strings all tuned to high C, and with each hundred kilometres that he had put between himself and Paris, the keys had turned a little, easing the tautness. He was glad now that he had run into the doctor at the Café de la Paix, although at the time he had blustered about being given advice out of office hours.

"My young friend," Dr. Bernard had said suddenly, after having thoroughly denounced the present cabinet, "you should not drink Pernod."

He followed Kenneth's amused glance at the milky, greenish-yellow liquid in his own glass.

"I said, '*You* should not drink Pernod,'" he smiled. "You are not a doctor. You were born with too many nerves."

"This isn't a real drink. This is medicine," Kenneth told him.

"Ah, Monsieur Verlaine. Or is it your illustrious Poe you are imitating? What is the stimulant for this time? The great American novel?"

Kenneth flicked his half-smoked cigarette across the sidewalk. He started as it nearly hit an elderly woman hailing a taxi from the kerb. "No," he said, automatically taking out his case. "The great American novel will have to wait. I've *got* to publish something quickly or the old man—I mean my father—will stop sending me my allowance. A friend of mine wants to put out a book of ghost stories and, thank God, he's given me the job."

"So," Dr. Bernard chuckled. "It is Poe."

Kenneth smiled. "Not quite. My imagination does well enough all by itself. But I've been working like the devil for three months now and I need something to keep me going."

"A mistake. A vast mistake. You will become subject-matter for one of your own stories long before you finish the book, if you continue at this rate."

"I sat down with you to have an *apéritif*, not to get free medical advice," Kenneth grumbled.

"You are scorning a hundred francs," the doctor sighed, "but no matter. So now you will get into your little car to-morrow morning and leave Paris far behind. You will go to my part of the country, the most tranquil in the whole world, and you will relax. For one month. There are many things to see there. It is covered with the finest *châteaux*, glorious monu-

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ments to the times when France was as it should be. And it has some excellent pre-historic caves. That is good. Pre-historic caves are very soothing. And you can eat *confit d'oie* and truffles, and even go boar-hunting like Henri Quatre if you choose. But no ghost stories."

After some feeble protests, Kenneth had consented. He was stale, tired and jumpy. And now, as he drove slowly toward the nearest village, he was glad that he had been given a valid excuse for visiting this region of France.

The small hotel was bare and rather shabby, but certainly good enough to sleep in after one had spent ten hours out of doors. Kenneth refused the many courses of the poor dinner and spent more than three times the amount on a single *paté de foie gras truffé* and a bottle of local wine. Then, mildly glowing inside and out, and unreasonably happy considering that he was completely sober, he sat on the *terrasse* of the café, actually enjoying his warm chicory and steeping himself in the profound peace of the village square.

Everything was as it should be. The war monument which, of course, would be hideous if you could see it distinctly, was an obscure block of stone in the shadows. Faint lights fell in patches through open doors, before which whole families were gathered round small tables, sipping their liqueurs. A child sat nearby, drowsily arranging pebbles in a meaningless pattern. Two dogs sniffed each other and walked off haughtily in opposite directions. The village drunkard stood in front of the church feebly waving his arms, sang one stanza of an ancient, ribald song in a cracked, quavering voice, and then, with lurching dignity, staggered home.

Three or four elderly men with finely-modelled, deeply-lined faces, were on the *terrasse*. They were



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talking heatedly about the good-for-nothing curé and broke off suddenly as he waddled up. His small, stupid eyes blinked amiably in his fat face. He shook hands with them, accepted a glass of *marc*, boomed incoherently for a few minutes about the decreasing piety of the commune, and waddled off, leaving his hosts with fresh fuel for their scepticism. But after a brief flare, their excitement suddenly cooled, and Kenneth was left alone on the *terrasse* with a glass of armagnac and a cat rubbing against his legs.

He felt like purring himself. To-morrow he would drive across this verdant, tranquil department and visit the famous pre-historic caves. They would be intensely interesting, but, as Dr. Bernard had said, soothing. Pre-historic ghosts may have been formidable, but they were quite peacefully remote. Anyway, there were no ghosts here. In a few minutes, when he went up to bed (thank God, all beds in France were comfortable), he would be sure of having his sleep undisturbed by his overworked imagination; there would be none of those ridiculously terrifying dreams he had had in Paris.

A sudden stream of light flung itself across the square from the road which joined the highway. Tourists, of course, just after he had been sure of avoiding them by staying in a village off the main route. He glared at the car as it drew up in front of the hotel. Wasn't *any* spot in France protected? He'd see enough gaping idiots to-morrow without having some of them track him down in advance. After all, when one wanted to gape oneself, one wanted to do it alone.

A tall, thick-set man got out of the car, followed by a tall, billowy woman. Objectionable beasts. Not of any nationality nor profession one could identify, but obviously stupid. Just ordinary people—dull and ugly.

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His glance flickered over them and was suddenly riveted. A third person was stepping out of the car. Kenneth swallowed and a little chill played scales on his spine.

You would probably call it a girl, although it seemed both ageless and sexless. It towered above the man and woman and its enormous body, although neither fat nor out of proportion, was peculiarly revolting, like the half-waking memory of some darkly primeval monster in a nightmare. Its large head was sunk deep and thrust forward between the massive, hunched shoulders. But the hands were the worst. They were huge, dangling hands, twitching spasmodically, as if searching for a human throat. As he watched them, they were raised and slid clingingly, sensually over the creature's breasts. She took a step forward and Kenneth looked at her face. Under a low, over-hanging brow, large, burning brown eyes were staring at him with maniacal intensity.

He glanced away as though his eyes had been stung and leaned over to stroke the cat. He drained his glass, took out his wallet, and carefully counted the sous three times. He fumbled for a cigarette and managed to light it on the fourth match. Good God, why didn't they go inside? He could feel that stare fixed on him unwaveringly, as if he were standing before the open door of a furnace. They had stopped fussing round the car now and were passing him. He would not look up. He would *not* look up. Yes, it was just as he had thought. The creature was following the others slowly, still gazing at him intently, as if he were a zoological specimen. As she passed, she turned her head, so that the last thing he saw was the eyes, looking at him searchingly, *entirely*, with a triumphantly knowing expression as if she had just met the partner of some old, obscene crime.

The heavy steps receded. Kenneth shook himself.

He certainly should put those ghost stories across, with such an extravagant imagination. "Elephantiasis," "arrested development," "harmless imbecility," he murmured. But his hands were perspiring and he waited until a light was turned on in the bedroom overhead before he went indoors. Long ago he had stopped trying to discipline himself. When he was a boy, during a vacation in the Rockies, he had killed a copperhead just before it sprang. The narrow escape had seemed quite commonplace. But it had not stopped his old habit of looking under the bed for snakes on the third floor of his parents' house in the heart of New York City. Of course he knew he would not find anything but his bedroom slippers, but he also knew that the more props you gave to your reason, the more likely you were to go to sleep as soon as the lights were out. So now he waited until the creature was upstairs before he moved, and when he reached his room, locked the door and put a chair against it.

The precautions were both unnecessary and futile. For he fell asleep before he had to struggle with any images. And after that, no struggle was possible.

One small house which he had never seen before was the whole world. Dr. Bernard was dining with him. The bottle of armagnac was in the hall closet. He went out and opened the door. For an instant nothing was visible in the opaque darkness. Then two glowing spots appeared, intensified, and he was looking into the eyes of a maniac. Two huge, coarse hands, the fingers slightly twitching, came out of the darkness, reaching for him. With a supreme effort he turned and forced his paralysed legs and leaden feet to carry him to the dining-room. Dr. Bernard was gone. He was alone in the world with those mad eyes and clutching hands. He slammed the door but he could not turn the key. He heard a heavy

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tread on the other side. The door knob was slowly turning. Frantically, his feet crawling, he reached the next room. He saw the triumphant eyes and the avid hands in the middle of the dining-room just before he managed to swing the door shut. Again the knob turned slowly. Again, with heart-breaking effort, he reached the next room just in time.

He had come to the last room. It was the end of the world and he could go no farther. It had no farther door. He crouched against the wall, listening to the ponderous, measured steps coming nearer, nearer. In a second he would see the eyes and the hands, gloating, in front of him. "No!" he cried. "This is only a dream. I *will* wake up." He strained his eyelids, fighting for consciousness. Ah, they were open now. He was lying on his bed in the Hôtel du Commerce. Through the flickering, light-reddish-brown specks in the air, he could see his clothes flung over a chair. But there, *there*, in his room in the village hotel, an enormous shadowy bulk was bending over him. The eyes were only a foot away, leering at him. The hands were stretched out, almost touching his throat. And then the reddish-brown specks dissolved and there was nothing between the bed and the chair but grey shadows.

The worst dream of all, the half-waking one. But his mind had no control over his body. Five minutes he lay on his back, the sheets drawn closely around him. There were six stars in the sky. That was a rooster crowing, but it must be a long time from dawn, for the sky was still dark. The faintly glimmering oblong across the room was the mirror of the armoire. He got up and switched on the light. The scant furnishings of the room sprang into life, safe and banal.

Yes, Dr. Bernard certainly had been right. If two or three minutes could make such an impression

on him, it was high time he stopped encouraging this questionable gift of his. He rummaged in his suitcase for a book on archaeology and read a chapter while he smoked a couple of cigarettes. He fell asleep trying to memorize the technical names of famous skulls.

He woke late and was relieved to see that the car was gone. As he sat in the warm morning sun, drinking his *café au lait*, he felt rather ashamed of his nightmare. Still, he had always disliked human monstrosities, even in a circus, and it was a bit disconcerting to have a grotesque side-show suddenly walk into your everyday life. Anyway, that was that. And now for the pre-historic caves.

He reached the famous little village at nightfall and persuaded the manager of the principal hotel to give him a late dinner. He slept dreamlessly and with a refreshing completeness, and did not wake up until the sunlight flooded the room and fell on his face.

On his way to the caves, he stopped in one of the shops to buy cigarettes. He glanced over the revolving rack of postcards while he was waiting for his change. Most of them were typically ugly and absurd—a picture of the station, one of the main hotel. But this time the photographic gods who usually spread the cult of mediocrity, as if trying to prove that all France is just like Peoria, had made a few concessions. Kenneth found several cards which actually showed the grottoes and kindred subjects. Among them was a conception of primitive man, supposedly based on one of the famous skulls. The result, however, seemed more artistic than scientific. The shape of the head, the low, over-hanging brow, the brutal jaw—fair enough. But the sculptor had outweighed the archaeologist, and had been a highly romantic one too. For the expression of the eyes was



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haunting. They seemed to be striving for more than the shallow brain-pan could hold, to be struggling feebly but patiently for comprehension and to be filled with infinite sadness at the inevitable defeat. " ' Seeking the light ' stuff," Kenneth thought, as he replaced the post card. It would amuse Dr. Bernard. He took it out again, scribbled the address and a brief message, and looked at it again before he put it in his pocket (of course, the nearest letter box was opposite his hotel). He smiled as he thought of an encounter between the idealistic sculptor and his subject, alive and as he probably did look when, for instance, he was driving wild horses over the edge of a cliff so that he could eat their mangled flesh for dinner. And how did he act when he was drunk ? He wondered if they had discovered any intoxicants in those early days. Anyway, it would be amusing to see a few of them walk into the Select about four o'clock some morning.

His nonsensical speculations stopped jerkily. Something in his mind stirred uneasily. He felt that some unpleasant association was about to break to the surface and that if he concentrated, it would reveal itself. Something in one of the ghost stories, perhaps. But he was to forget those for a month. He resolutely shut his mind and walked to the largest grotto.

Several people were already waiting and the guide let them in immediately. He turned a switch and a line of electric light bulbs illuminated the long, narrow passage. The cave-dwellers were pushed back even farther into oblivion. The place had an air of unreality, like a Zulu hut at a colonial exposition. Or more like a Japanese summer house in Jackson Park, for here there was no attempt at "atmosphere." Of course a candle would have been as much an anachronism and would have made examination of

the world-famous drawings more difficult, but why not use oil lamps, as those early artists did themselves? Kenneth was disappointed. You simply couldn't get excited about the adolescence of the human race when its primitive dwelling was better lit than the average French country hotel.

The guide encouraged his clients by pointing to the only possible entrance to the caves beyond. Then he went back and peered around the heavy wooden door which he had left ajar, on the chance of finding some more tourists who would be willing to give him a few francs for the privilege of saying that they had been there.

Kenneth did not wait. Guides were only an enforced nuisance, and there was no chance of getting lost along this single, brilliantly clear passage. Perhaps he could even reach the inner cave and have a glimpse of the remarkable drawings before the crowd descended upon him.

The corridor was level for some distance and then rose in a steep and slippery hump with only a small hole at the top to pass through. Kenneth clambered over it, pushing against the clammy oozing walls on both sides in order to keep his balance. He slowly eased himself down, picking his footing carefully. One could have a nasty spill here. Perhaps the electric lights weren't such a bad idea after all. He hurried along the narrow, twisting cleft in the sheer rock. It broadened at another rise, a slight one this time, at the entrance of the central chamber. He scrambled over it and stood looking at the amazing drawing on the wall. Mechanically, he pulled out his handkerchief to dry his hands.

And some sentimental believer in the theory of progress had made his reconstruction of primitive man look yearning and frustrated! Why, many paintings in the Salon to-day were not so good as this. This

delicately shaded bison, with legs more beautiful than any woman's, would be an unhopèd-for *chef d'œuvre* if found in an exhibition around Montparnasse. It was the most blasting satirical comment on the human race he had ever seen. One of its remote ancestors, regarded with horror or contempt, had produced this, while forty thousand artists in Paris alone were turning out thirty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-five kinds of tripe. One man with a low forehead and a thick skull weighed against forty thousand emancipated intellectuals. The result was not flattering.

But the others were arriving. Kenneth dived into a side cave and examined it until their "ohs" and "ahs" had ceased and the stream of tourists started trickling back toward the entrance. He looked lingeringly at the bison before he followed. That was the devilish part of this guide business. You were rushed through Mont Saint-Michel in an hour and were allowed a scant five minutes to look at the origin of art. And then you tipped the guide and thanked him. Good Lord, he had nothing but hundred-franc notes! No, he had stuffed the change in his pocket at the tobacco shop. He thrust his hand in and found nothing but his damp handkerchief. He must have dropped the loose notes in the cave. He hesitated. It would be embarrassing, for guides never had change for a hundred francs. The last tourist was disappearing over the hump. He would have plenty of time to go back and get the money. There was at least an even chance that no one had picked it up. He ran back and found it, slightly torn and soiled, at the base of the wall with the painting. As he turned, the lights went out.

"Hey!" he yelled.

The only answer was the muffled slam of the heavy wooden door at the entrance.

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This was a nice fix! It must be near noon now and so he would have to wait at least two hours before the guide returned. And he was hungry and it was damned chilly in here. But at least he wouldn't have to wait in the dark. If he was careful, he could get over the hump in the corridor and reach the switch in a few minutes.

He was suddenly desperately anxious to get to the entrance and turn on the light. The blackness was thick and oppressive. Somewhere in the cave a steady drip, drip fell as if Time himself were ironically using a tack hammer, wearing down stone, wearing down men, slowly, inexorably, scorning a larger weapon since he had all eternity for his work. No wonder the modern world was crazy, living as it did in a perpetual uproar, when one small sound could make him a boy again, afraid of the dark.

The passage was to the left. He must save his matches for cigarettes. He felt his way along the wall, sliding his feet out in front of him. Lucky for him that primitive man had not devised oubliettes. Ah, there was the rise starting under his feet, and the space above it. He raised one foot.

The next instant all his life had been drawn to his ears, up from his heart, down from his brain, so that his whole body was nothing but a listening organism. The drip fell once, twice three times. And then he heard it again. A low, anguished moan, faintly echoing. The drip fell once, twice, three times, four times. Silence.

Kenneth found himself standing with his back to the wall. This way lies madness. This way lies madness. As soon as your heart slows up a bit, you must make the supreme effort to reason about this.

Now. Who knows what tricks of atmospheric pressure or of the wind above ground may have caused this. There must be crevices in the roof,

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small but adequate. As usual, the enemy was within. A simple, natural phenomenon was peopling the dark with wild ghosts and pre-historic monsters. And he was nearly thirty and had never feared real danger in his life. If there had been real danger here, he could have coped with it. But there was nothing. Nothing but his damnfool imagination. It could not hurt him since he had recognized it. After all, the only difference between him and the man who painted that bison on the wall was what lay in the hollow of one's head. But that was enough. Things lost their power over you after you labelled them. So now he would go to the entrance and turn on the light.

That's only the wind again. Of course it's the wind. The way it moans down chimneys on a stormy night. But the wind doesn't shuffle. It doesn't breathe like a bellows. It doesn't whimper and sob *exactly* like a human being.

Nonsense. Of course it does. Especially if you're in a dark cave with a quarter of a mile between you and the heavy wooden door at the entrance. Just over that rise and beyond that bend and you'll be out of sight of this beastly cave. Why "out of sight?" Well, out of hearing then. What's keeping you anyway?

It was no use. You just couldn't turn your back on a big, ink-black cave and worm your way slowly over slippery rock while that wailing was getting louder—and nearer. Perhaps it was a dog. That was it. Of course. A dog. He hadn't seen the second group of tourists. So you just fooled yourself and lay your own ghosts. Weak, perhaps, but wise. You struck a match and looked at a dog.

His fingers trembled as he found the right end of the match and laid it against the box. Why did that moment before you drew it sharply along the side



seem heavy and fateful ? Dramatizing as usual. But disgusting this time. Why, even when he was a kid, he had never been afraid of what he might *actually* see. Bad nerves. Alcohol. Ghost stories. But revolting just the same. He clenched his teeth and struck the match. He concentrated on sheltering it with his cupped hands until it was flaring. Then he looked up.

Three feet away stared two burning, maniacal eyes. Two huge, dangling hands were thrust forward, reaching for him. The tiny flame streaked to the floor. Out of the darkness came a triumphant cry followed by crazy laughter.

He was stumbling, slipping, falling, bruising his hands and knees, bumping his head against the wall, but out in the passage at last, over the rise and throwing himself through space. He could hear her lumbering after him, panting heavily and muttering some strange gibberish which bore no resemblance to any human language he had ever heard. If he could only get over the hump in time. Where was it ? My God, *where* was it ? He fell against it and sprawled on the floor. The heavy footsteps, running now, echoed along the corridor. He sprang up, scrambled up the steeply sloping rock, slipping a foot or two, straining up again. His hand touched the top. The footsteps had stopped. He stepped a notch higher, groping for the walls. A hand closed on his ankle. With a spurt of frenzy, he hurled himself down the other side and crashed on the stone floor. He had gained a few minutes. If he could only reach the light. He stood up, but then one leg crumpled under him. He crawled, dragging it after him. The light. The light. To the left of the door. She was screaming. Mad, frustrated screams.

At the end of the passage, a faint, grey rectangle. An eternal minute, pushing the stone floor inch by

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inch in back of you, stretching your arms out to gain another foot. He sat with his back to the wall and straightened his good leg. The switch. Where was it? Above? Below? To the left? Nearer the door? The screams had stopped. She might be standing next to him, holding her breath, waiting for him to turn on the light. Here was the switch. Should he turn it? His hand moved convulsively. Light flooded the entrance and corridor, blinding him for an instant. It was empty. Silence. A gloating yell. He had shown her the way. Too late now. He braced himself against the wall and watched the opening of the corridor.

She filled the aperture, gigantic, powerful. Under the low, over-hanging brow, the mad eyes were fixed on him: leering. Blood trickled from the blunt, outspread fingers. She was running toward him. The hands were raised. They touched him. . . .

When the guide opened the door five minutes later, he started and blinked. "Mon Dieu," he muttered, motioning to the crowd to keep back.

On the floor lay a young man with one leg twisted under him. His head rested in the lap of an enormous creature who was stroking his hair and crooning softly.

When Dr. Bernard arrived, he was reassured by Kenneth's casual greeting. As usual, the village authorities had exaggerated.

"How's your leg?" he inquired.

Kenneth raised his head from the pillow.

"People should stay in their own archaeological period," he said.

Only after several interviews did Dr. Bernard understand the situation.

He drew his chair up to the bed. "A doctor meets many curious phenomena in the course of his career," he began. "Among them is the dramatic one of the so-called throw-back, when a healthy, average couple have a child that is grotesquely deformed, sometimes resembling an animal or a more primitive type of the human race. I heard of a strange case recently. A well-to-do Breton fishing magnate and his wife, who was also of apparently sound bourgeois stock, had a daughter who was afflicted with a variety of elephantiasis and who looked quite insane as well. They took her to several leading specialists who pronounced her an incurable imbecile, but absolutely harmless. They were ashamed of her and moved to a village where she picked up the Breton language from an old fisherman with whom she constantly associated because he was the only villager who was kind to her. The children made fun of her. She grew up physically—extravagantly so—but never mentally nor emotionally. For example, she always had a child's fear of the dark. She was never *méchante* but she retained a certain harmless cunning, which is also one of the characteristics of children. She liked to play little tricks on her parents, like hiding from them and appearing unexpectedly.

"When she was about twenty, the fisherman died. Here, too, she was childish in her craving for constant affection and her utter grief at its loss. Her family hoped to distract her by travelling.

"They drove toward the south. One morning in a small village, she slipped away from them. They searched all over for her, but it was not until after luncheon that they found that she had visited one of the pre-historic caves for which the place was famous, and had been—— Leg hurting again? You'd better take this."

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The next morning Kenneth really looked at Dr. Bernard for the first time in three days.

"I ran away from a harmless imbecile."

Dr. Bernard nodded.

"God!" said Kenneth, turning over.

The doctor laughed. "Don't let that bother you. Everybody has run away from something. But most people haven't the excuse of such an artistic setting."

# MONTGOMERY BELGION

## THE THREAT TO CIVILIZATION

A large number of authors and journalists have lately found a regular mine of copy in the theory that a crisis has arrived in human destiny. They ground the theory upon their own allegation that civilization is in danger. Moreover, few are content, like Spengler, to deliver their gloomy warning and no more, on the resigned supposition that in any case civilization has been foredoomed and there is nothing to be done. Having proclaimed the danger, most go on to clamour for measures to avert it, and then, each according to his fancy, they prescribe what the measures should be.

The prescriptions vary greatly, but many have this in common, that if the measures prescribed came to be taken the ordinary man and woman would be surrendering to certain of their fellow-human beings the direction of what has hitherto been regarded as their exclusively private concern. Capitalism must give place to Socialism. Capitalism must cease being as Socialistic as it is said to have already become. The State must take charge of the community's economic life. Our only chance lies in economic individualism. There must be European unity. There must be Imperial unity. We need a world-state. Strong nationalism is the safeguard. The only hope is in Regionalism. The present "political disintegration" must be counteracted. The end of religion will be the beginning of salvation. We must all become Roman Catholics. Birth-control must be abandoned. The future depends on strict birth-control. Our morals are too lax. The "superstition of sin" must be stamped out. These different and often opposite remedies all find their passionate advocates. But although many of them are evidently opposed to each other, that is not, I think, the important thing to be noticed about them. The important thing is, that the application of any



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among several of them—the insistence upon, or the suppression of, birth-control ; the stamping out of “ the superstition of sin ” ; strong Nationalism ; compulsory conversion to Roman Catholicism or compulsory irreligion ; and so on—would obviously affect very profoundly the private lives of ordinary people. Plainly, the suggestion is, that to certain State regulations devised by a few self-appointed persons ordinary people, having only a short span in which to live, are to submit the direction of their lives in a manner never hitherto demanded either by tyrants or by circumstances, and this in order that civilization may be preserved from a supposed disruption.

Recent history supplies several instances of where momentous changes have come about as a result of having been previously advocated with great energy, and on the analogy of such instances it is not unreasonable to suppose that if the authors and journalists now putting forward schemes for saving civilization are allowed to go on clamouring for the adoption of the schemes, there will eventually be at least the attempt to adopt some of them. Since, then, the private lives of ordinary men and women would in that case be profoundly affected, ordinary men and women are entitled by the present agitation on behalf of civilization to put to themselves three questions, namely : (1) Can we be assured that, if civilization really is in danger, the danger will be averted by the adoption of any of the measures now being advocated ? (2) What is this “ civilization ” to the preservation of which we are invited to subordinate the living of our lives ? and (3) Even if civilization is in danger, does that mean that a crisis has been reached in human destiny ? The purpose of this paper is to offer *seriatim* brief answers to those three questions.

To the first question the answer cannot be in doubt. It may definitely be affirmed that, supposing civilization actually were in peril just now, there is no assurance whatever that human action of any kind could avail to save it. It is obviously thought by those who are advocating measures to avert the supposedly imminent collapse of civilization that the measures they each happen to favour would arrest the *causes* of such a collapse. They imagine that what these causes are is shown by history. They contend that we to-day are in a more fortunate position than members of previous civilizations have been, because for the pre-

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serving of our civilization we have history to guide us and they did not have it to guide them. Their contention is not to be substantiated. The only help there can be from history—assuming, what is doubtful, that we are able to interpret history correctly—is negative help. History does not show that if certain measures are taken when civilizations are about to collapse, the causes of collapse are arrested and the civilizations survive. At best history shows that where civilizations have decayed and vanished in the past, whatever, if anything, was done to save them was ineffective. Those who suppose that history enables us to discern the causes of the decline and fall of civilizations are guilty of that of which Mill accused Bacon : they “entirely overlook Plurality of Causes.” Mill invented the expression “Plurality of Causes” to indicate the fact that the same phenomenon may appear to have different causes on different occasions. Possibly he wrote as if phenomena actually do have different causes at different times, but if in that he was necessarily wrong, at least it is impossible to disagree with him when he pointed out the mistake of trying to discover causes from effects instead of confining oneself to trying to discover effects from causes. It is this mistake which is made by all the authors and journalists now demanding that either this or that measure should be taken to avert the collapse of civilization. Obviously the decline and fall of a civilization is a very complex event. It must have a composition of causes. It is absurd to imagine that its sufficient and necessary causes can be revealed by the mere study of the imperfect record of the events which preceded it.

And if, supposing civilization were in fact on the verge of collapse, there is this general objection to taking any course to avert the collapse, so there are particular objections to each of the proposed measures for averting it which are now being put forward. For example, the political as distinguished from the religious argument against birth-control is that a low birth-rate exposes a nation to conquest by invaders. Yet the truth is that conquests are not invariably arrested by weight of numbers. Historians say that European civilization narrowly escaped destruction at the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the Tatar hordes of Jengis Khan penetrated under one of his lieutenants as far as Hungary. But if European civilization was im-

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perilled then, what saved it was not the size of the European armies lined up to oppose the invaders. It was saved, if indeed it was then in peril, by the adventitious death of Jengis Khan, that death causing the invaders to turn tail in order that their leader might prosecute at headquarters his claim to a share in the great conqueror's legacy. Moreover, it cannot in any case be maintained that a foreign invasion invariably means the downfall of a civilization. If anything in history is instructive the Norman Conquest of Britain must be. But did that conquest abolish a civilization? Far from it. There are on the Norman Conquest two views. One is that, quite the contrary of blotting out a civilization, it gave birth to one. More lately another view has been advanced, the view that a civilization already existed in England before the Conquest and survived it. The English civilized their conquerors. On either view, there is nothing to make the English, on behalf of their civilization, fear invasion.

Similar doubts might be cast on the value of several of the other measures now being proposed. But leaving the matter at that, let me turn to the second of the questions to which I am offering answers, the question, What is this "civilization" to the preservation of which we are invited to subordinate the living of our lives? No sooner is this question attended to than the suspicion dawns upon one that our alarmists have sought to spread alarm without first ascertaining what it might be that we should be alarmed about. It may be noted that the theory that civilization is in danger has lately been advanced, first following on the Great War, and more recently following on the world-wide economic depression. Persons with long enough memories, however, will not take it on that account to be a new theory. In the middle of the nineties of the last century, Max Nordau was fathering the same theory on the strength of mankind's supposed degeneration. Since then the advance of mankind's supposed degeneration has not been very visible and civilization has certainly survived. One may accordingly wonder if such events as the Great War and the present world-wide economic depression are actually symptomatic of a danger to civilization.

In particular, if those who want it generally believed that civilization is now threatened see the sign of peril in the economic depression, they are, to my mind, committing

themselves to either one of two views. On the one hand, they may imagine that economic prosperity and civilization are the same thing. That, on the face of it, sounds ridiculous. Yet I am far from sure that many of our alarmists have not hastily assumed precisely that. I shall not labour the point how, if they have, they are being absurd. If generally we were to believe that civilization and prosperity of trade are the same thing, then indeed we should be no more than a nation of shopkeepers.

On the other hand, if those who are asserting that civilization is in danger consider what is dangerous to be the present trade depression, they may be imagining, not that trade *is* civilization, but that civilization only exists thanks to trade, and that unless a large volume of trade is maintained in the Western world it is impossible for that world to remain civilized. This view is not patent nonsense like the other view, the view that civilization and economic prosperity are the same thing. Still its correctness can by no means be taken for granted. It has to be asked, What do we mean by "civilization"?

We may, for instance, mean art and learning. But if we do, then I do not think it is true that either the production of the best art or the acquisition of the highest learning in a human society must depend on great economic prosperity. No doubt the cultivation of learning and the cultivation of what nowadays is intended by the word "art" do depend on the existence of a leisure class, and no doubt too the existence of a leisure class of a certain kind depends in turn on the prosperity of trade. But it is necessary to draw some distinctions. To begin with, one has to distinguish between the production of art and its mere cultivation and between the production of new "knowledge" and the mere cultivation or application of learning. Our civilization at present certainly devotes much treasure and attention to cultivating art and learning. But it is not producing either great art or valuable new "knowledge" except new "knowledge" of one kind, to which I shall refer presently. We cannot deceive ourselves that we are producing either great pictures or great music, either great sculpture or great architecture, and we are certainly not producing great literature or great philosophy. The past can show far mightier achievements in all these domains than we can, and those achieve-

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ments all took place at times when the amount of economic prosperity was much smaller than the amount we ourselves are enjoying in this our great trade depression.

One must also distinguish between different kinds of leisure classes. For art and learning to be merely cultivated, as they are at present, when no great art or valuable new "knowledge" is being produced—except, as I say, new "knowledge" in one single department—it is not in the least essential that there should be a leisure class owing its existence to economic prosperity. It is enough that there should be some leisure class, and this may well be one which is nowise dependent upon the maintenance of a large volume of trade. From the sixth century on throughout the Middle Ages both the practice of art and the pursuit of learning were preserved by monks, and these monks, although they undoubtedly formed a leisure class in a sense, did not owe their existence as a class to the simultaneous existence in the regions where they dwelt of great economic prosperity. Their existence, as we know, depended directly on the land in their neighbourhood.

Again, economic prosperity has no direct connexion with the maintenance or abolition of centres of learning. For example, in the seventh century the University of Constantinople was closed, not owing to lack of students or lack of funds, but simply because the Emperor Phocas disapproved of it. Later it was revived, and when finally it came to be abolished, the abolition likewise had no economic cause: it followed on a change of ownership in Constantinople, the city passing from the possession of the Emperors into that of the Turks. In the same way, we are not entitled to say that a decline in trade is what leads a community to abandon certain branches of learning, for there have been cases in the past of a community's abandoning branches of learning because the community had grown hostile to such learning. That is how the study of Aristotle and Plato came to be abandoned in the early Middle Ages. It is quite a mistake to suppose that the Dark Ages, as they are called, were dark owing to the decline and fall of Roman trade, although it would seem to be on the strength of supposing this that certain writers now think that culture depends entirely on economic prosperity. The Dark Ages were dark because then people liked darkness.



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But perhaps the writers who want people to believe that civilization is in danger, because for them the present trade depression is a danger to civilization, do not mean by "civilization" art and learning. They may consider that we of to-day in the West are civilized because we are tolerant of each other and of opposite opinions, are kind to each other and to dumb animals, and generally live with more refinement than our ancestors lived a thousand years ago. Hence they may suppose that these social qualities of ours would never have developed had it not been for the way in which trade expanded a few centuries back, and so that such qualities do actually depend for their existence in a society on economic prosperity. But if that is what these writers mean by "civilization," I am not at all sure that it, any more than the production of great art and new "knowledge," does depend on much trade. For, to take only one instance, the Romans enjoyed for a long period quite as much material prosperity as Christian society enjoyed when it acquired these qualities, and yet the Romans did not acquire them. To my mind, the acquisition of the qualities was not due to an increase of economic prosperity at all, but simply to the persuasiveness of certain individuals. Not trade, but men of ideas, are the source of changes in social sensibility.

Incidentally, it may be remarked that the persons by whom economic prosperity is chiefly promoted, the magnates of trade, set small store by either art or learning or by refinements of feeling and behaviour. No doubt they buy old masters at fabulous prices and build extravagantly appointed houses. No doubt too they are lavish in their endowments of universities. But it is in my mind a question whether they do not do these things for display and also whether their donations are not partly at least conscience money. In any case there is no doubt that art and learning and the finer feelings are not paramount among their interests. The American Charles Francis Adams, a very remarkable man, expressed the opinion towards the end of his life that "business success—money-getting—comes from rather a low instinct." It was an opinion based on ample experience. The capacity for making money, he went on to say, is, "as far as my knowledge goes, rarely met in combination with the finer or more interesting traits of character. I have known, and known

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tolerably well, a good many 'successful' men—'big' financially—men famous during the last half-century" (1850-1900); "and a less interesting crowd I do not care to encounter either in this world or the next. Not one is associated in my mind with the idea of humour, thought, or refinement." According to Adams, the making of money requires so much concentration that the money-maker of his day could not spare attention for other things. We are told that since his day a new type of industrial chieftain has arisen. But one may doubt it. Of course there are to-day big business men who are also men of learning—Sir Josiah Stamp, for example—but on the whole the real successes of business, the true "Empire builders," would seem to be still of the same stock.

However, a third meaning which can be given to the term "civilization" remains to be considered. If the writers who assert that civilization is in danger are doing so because they regard the present state of trade throughout the world as a danger to civilization, it may be that by "civilization" they mean material comfort. In that case they would of course be right in maintaining that our civilization is now producing valuable new "knowledge." For, as I said earlier, in one branch we to-day are producing new "knowledge," and I can now say what branch that is. We are producing new scientific knowledge. Yet such knowledge is not like other "knowledge." If we come to know a great poem, our knowing the poem is enjoyable disinterestedly. The benefits of philosophical knowledge are intangible. And so on. But although scientists may themselves be disinterested, the purpose for which science is pursued is not. Science is pursued solely for utility. Scientific knowledge conforms to Bacon's ideal of knowledge: it assists man to be more comfortable. And the production of this knowledge is expensive: it does depend on economic prosperity. And so does the material comfort which the production renders possible. Hence if one regards material comfort (and the science which ministers to it) as civilization, then it is true that civilization requires a large volume of trade if it is to be preserved. Still, one recollects that for material comfort to continue to be available in a community, economic prosperity is not the sole essential. It is also necessary that men shall go on valuing that material comfort. To suggest that men might cease valuing it may

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sound preposterous. Yet history records that that has happened. Architects declare that we are only now catching up with the Romans in the matter of appointing a house to the comfort of its inhabitants. The Romans were noted, not only for their comfortable houses, but also for their luxurious bathing establishments. When both the Roman house and the Roman bath disappeared, however, the fault did not lie with a decline in trade. They disappeared because men came to think them wrong. In particular, the Roman baths decayed or were destroyed owing to the spread of the Early Christians' opinion that bathing was sinful. Let it come to be thought that motor-cars or wireless sets are evil, and whether trade is prosperous or not, they too will disappear.

There is further an objection to regarding the material comfort which has been made possible by scientific discovery as constituting civilization. It is that many of the things produced thanks to science and now enjoyed by great numbers of mankind are no better than toys. Naturally nobody will decry countless labour-saving devices now employed in the home. Electric irons, sewing-machines, carpet-sweepers, frigidaire, and the like, are blessed wherever they are installed. Most of those who enjoy electric or gas-light—and in some countries they include the inhabitants of the smallest villages—would be sorry to forgo it. Nobody wants to exchange express trains for the old stage coaches. And so on. But the motor-car, the wireless, the telephone, the cinematographic camera and like inventions, do seem to be put a great deal to quite puerile purposes—for most people they are toys. Of course man does not live by bread alone and toys have their place. But as rich children sometimes discover, cheap toys are quite as serviceable as expensive ones.

Thus it is not surprising that the question whether or not men are truly better off for the development science has undergone in the last three centuries is often debated. A point which is not so commonly made is that the material comfort due to science is not generally accessible. No doubt the lot of even the lowliest human being, provided he dwells in the "civilized" areas, is in some measure the more comfortable for scientific discoveries. But compared with what material comfort at present can be, that measure of comfort which has been made universal is but a pale reflection of

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real luxury. If by "civilization" material comfort, and the scientific study which has rendered it possible, are meant, then the majority of mankind does not partake in civilization.

The same is true if by "civilization" is meant art and learning. By far the greater number of men and women, even in civilized countries, do not directly enjoy either. At most the masses can be called civilized in the sense that they are, or are restrained from not being, tolerant and considerate both to others and to animals. Even so, they are of course far from being as tolerant and considerate as the educated few.

As regards in particular art, it is worth noting that the only art which has ever been enjoyed by the whole community is music, and the enjoyment had nothing to do with economic prosperity. Perhaps it will be said that science, in the form of the gramophone and the wireless, is bringing music once more within the reach of all. But there is a great difference between listening to the metallic clang of gramophone or receiving-set and singing or playing instruments oneself. The world into which J. S. Bach was born at Eisenach in 1685 was a world where ordinary men and women enjoyed music by being musical; neither the gramophone nor the wireless is reviving that world: both are, if anything, putting it farther and farther away.

Indeed, it is doubtful if economic prosperity can ever make the whole of mankind civilized in any sense of the word. Before art and learning will be enjoyed by all, the human being must become different from what he is now and apparently always has been. So with tolerance and considerateness; and even material comfort—which we most of us who are articulate to-day regard as bound to become universal—requires for its proper enjoyment personal characteristics not possessed by the mass of men and women.

This brings me to the answer I have to offer to the third of the three questions I am considering, the question, Even if civilization is in danger, does that mean that a crisis has been reached in human destiny? For in view of what I have just been recalling, it is evident that the great mass of people do not truly enjoy, and never have truly enjoyed, the benefits of civilization. In whatever sense one takes the term, unless one looks upon the circus on the one hand, and the football match on the other, as the fullest

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expressions of civilization, one has to recognize that among the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans, those who actually partook in civilization were but a froth on the surface of the community, and that it is the same in our own day.

This makes it legitimate to ask if it can be in the nature of things for mankind in general to be civilized. If it is not, then of course for civilization to be in peril could not portend a crisis in human destiny. Further, we must recognize, I think, that even if our civilization were to pass away, life would still be as worth living for the many, the *sine nomine vulgus*, as it is now. The profoundest satisfactions of being alive, which are found in the ties of affection, in mutual help, in the contact with the soil, and in work well done, would still be within the reach of all.

Certainly these satisfactions are not being rendered generally more accessible by the present trend of the conduct of trade. On the contrary. The miner's life, as Mr. Jack Lawson points out in his autobiography, is not so rich in them to-day as it was when he was a boy, although then the miner earned much less than he does now, but owing to his having as his employer, not the mighty and impersonal colliery company, but the small mine-owner, he was more the captain of his soul. This seems to be growing equally true for the lives of men in other occupations. In particular, traditions of skilled craftsmanship are dying out, and without them men can no longer obtain the fullest satisfaction from work well done. Pride in the machine one tends or manipulates is, where it exists, no adequate substitute. Then, also, there is to-day the vast army of those who cannot have any satisfaction from work well done since there is no work for them to do. What Marx described as the permanent reservoir of unemployed necessitated by the capitalist system is now more than full and overflowing and it promises to remain so. Thousands of men, still young, will never work. And one may well wonder if a permanent absence of work for many thousands is not the concomitant of making economic prosperity the community's chief aim, if, so long as economic prosperity is regarded as the essential of civilization, a multitude of human beings must not be denied one of the main things making life worth living.



A. L. ROWSE

AUGUSTE NEPT : 1877 \*

*So here you are, brave soldier !  
You that were young in seventy-seven.  
How clear it is he loved you :  
Did you respond, I wonder ?*

*But he has left for later ages,  
For the posterity that is I,  
The ineffaceable mould of feature  
The form that in God's eye  
You were, and still to us is you.*

*L'Homme s'éveillant à la nature,  
He called you, thinking to stifle his love,  
And make a parable of his pain.*

*Did he think so to forget  
The summer of seventy-seven,  
And Bruxelles dusty under the lime trees,  
And the Caserne, the bugles and the trumpets,  
The watered pavements in the morning,  
Your upturned face in the archway,  
Under the lamp at night ?*

*If so, here it is.*

\* The model for Rodin's *L'Age d'Airain* was named Auguste Nept.

A. L. ROWSE

*(O for the summer of seventy-seven,  
The heat, the Exposition Universelle  
And the gendarmes of the Trocadero, the gardener  
Watering the flower-beds before the heat o' the sun,  
And MacMahon, and you.)*

Fear no more the heat o' the sun.

*Only so has he possessed you,  
And saved your body out of the wrack of time.*

*Where else then is this body,  
Mauled or distorted by the years,  
Scarred by the fevers of the flesh,  
Ravaged by the worms,  
Put out by death ?  
Where is this dust :  
Mixed into the mould of many battles,  
Ploughed into the fields,  
Or sleeping by some quiet water  
By Louveciennes or Charleroi,  
Having found death late in an arm-chair by the fire-  
side,  
Or early, by the fevered waters of the Congo ?*

*This is my body.  
What else that matters ?*

*He has saved you from the body's death  
And made you for ever young :  
Though you had no pity on him for his love,  
Have mercy upon me now !*



*Drawing by Chana Orloff.*



## NEVILLE BRAND

### BAD BUSINESS

Barbara Frant was surprised when the Devil came into her room.

She was sitting by the fire, a silk kimono over her pyjamas. She was staring into the glowing coals and telling herself how fortune had deserted her. By turning her head she could see her reflection in the long mirror and a dozen times she had looked up, scrutinizing the image there, admiring it and at the same time hating it. Every one said she was pretty. She knew she was. Uncommonly pretty. Slender, tall, fair, with a good figure and laughing eyes and a provocative mouth, she knew perfectly well she typified the Modern Girl. Hadn't she been told, times without number, that she was the most desirable creature alive ?

Yet things had gone awry. Everything. Heaven alone knew why! People going abroad or getting married to tiresome women who couldn't understand how essential it was to have a little variety in one's feminine companionship. People losing their money or taking it into their heads to spend it on useless things such as books or houses or aeroplanes.

Barbara Frant threw into the fire the end of her seventh cigarette and sighed. Even the weather was



against her. She could hear the dreep of the rain in the gutter outside the window and the wind was skirling mournfully. She felt that she had been sitting there for a week and yet she simply hadn't the energy to move. If she went to bed she wouldn't sleep; thoughts would come piling on top of her like a great stifling pillow. And there was no getting away from the fact that she had had some bad thoughts during the past day or two. Really bad; downright wicked ones. The kind of thoughts that sent thrills down her back. She envied the Borgias and Messalina and people of that sort who had the courage of their bad thoughts, and the means to translate them into reality. It must be enormous fun, but when your bank balance was as sick as a dog it did rather cramp your style.

Of course, there was crime. That would be exciting, until you got caught and that she simply couldn't face. Not the disgrace of it, but the discomfort; the chill of stone stairs and whitewashed passages and things like that. She would never forget the night she went to bail out Mona Tyringham, how the place was dank and horrible. No, unless you could do it on a big scale—all the same, there wasn't much she wouldn't be prepared to do, in her present state of mind.

"I fancy you wanted me?"

It was said in such a polite, gentle voice that Barbara wasn't scared. She just turned round to see who was there, as coolly as if it had been Tony or Philip or Martin Crashaw who had wandered in. And then she did get a shock, for she found herself facing the Devil.

It should be explained that Barbara, in common with many other modern people, did not believe in the Devil. There was good luck and bad luck, and

that was about all. As for anything so old fashioned as the Devil, well, it was absurd.

"I beg your pardon, but how did you get in?"

He moved as she said that and looked down at her and smiled in the most friendly way. It really was absurd. There he was, dressed all in black with a long feather sticking out of the hat he carried and his hair brushed back in a quiff over two small horns. And such odd shoes, with a division up the middle, as if his feet were hooves. And there was a curious smell which Barbara imagined was cough lozenges, but which she subsequently decided must be sulphur. No, really, it was too ridiculous! In fact, she laughed.

"I said, how did you get in?" she repeated. "You've no right to come pushing into my flat. I suppose I left the door open. I'm silly enough for anything just now."

The Devil didn't wait to be asked to sit down, but drew up a chair and settled himself at the opposite side of the fire. Barbara noticed how the firelight concentrated in his eyes, till they shone like a couple of tail lamps.

"Never mind how I got in. I'm here, and that's what matters. Now, please don't think me interfering, but I happen to know you're rather worried. No thanks, I don't smoke. Now, I've come to make you an offer. You needn't accept if you don't want to. Yes, I know it's raining outside, but I dry very quickly. Please, do listen because I can help you. You're short of money; you're short of friends; you're fed up with life — no, don't get up. I like to see you sitting there. The fire's not too hot for me, I assure you."

Barbara sat down again. After all, he was charming and, you never knew. Queer things did happen.

"Well," she said, "go on, please."

The Devil cleared his throat and smoothed the folds of his cloak.

"I am prepared to offer you the fulfilment of three wishes," he said. "Three, and no more. But it's wonderful what you can do with three, if you go about it properly. I leave it entirely to you; I make no suggestions; I have no prejudices. Just three wishes and one small thing in return. What do you say?"

Barbara Frant pinched her thigh, to make sure that she was awake. But of course she was. Her mind, which had been so tortured for days past, had suddenly become clear. Ideas, hundreds of the most fascinating ideas, came flooding in.

"Do I have to answer now?" she asked.

"If you don't mind. I'm a busy man."

"Well, it is simply too thrilling. You say you'll want something in return? What'll that be?"

The eyes that watched her narrowed till they were no more than fiery slits. The tall figure seemed to grow taller. The wind sent an eddy of smoke curling into the room.

"Only your soul, and I don't imagine you'll miss that very much."

"You don't —— yes, but if I ——"

A hand touched her knee; she closed her eyes, but that only made the images of her thoughts more vivid.

"Not the slightest pain, I assure you. A mere twinge, like pulling out an eyelash. Nothing more. No discomfort. No disfigurement."

"There's no—there's no medical examination or anything of that sort? It's not like being insured?"

The Devil leaned back in his chair and laughed.

"Not even a plain van to fetch it away," he assured her.

## NEVILLE BRAND

There was a moment of silence. The Devil's chair creaked and Barbara opened her eyes, to see if he was still there. She took a deep breath and clutched the sides of her chair.

"All right," she said. "I'll do it."

The Devil stood up and shook hands with her.

"Three wishes, then. One to-morrow; one the next day; and one the day after. And, on the fourth day, I shall call for your soul. Good-night; you will have happy dreams."

And they were happy dreams. When she woke next morning, Barbara had no recollection of how her visitor had left nor of getting into bed. But her heart was singing with joy; all her cares, all her worries had vanished. She sang as she dressed; she ran laughing down the stairs, and the taxi man who drove her to Sindemann's Hairdressing Establishment had grave doubts of her sanity on account of the uproarious way in which she congratulated him on his driving.

Sindemann's Hairdressing Establishment is all that it should be. It doesn't look in the least like a shop nor do its prices bear any relation to the time and trouble expended on its customers. It is the very last word in exclusiveness and you cannot spend half an hour there without meeting at least seven celebrities. Women celebrities, of course, for Sindemann doesn't cater for anything so crude as a man and his cropped head. When Barbara entered the reception hall, she sniffed the scented air and bowed to Vera Katamova, the World's Leading Vamp, who was sitting in an alcove. Vera acknowledged the salute, even though they had met only once, at a bottle party at Tony Candish's. Barbara's sensation of joy increased and she felt herself walking on air as she was led to a cubicle.

A permanent wave; one of Sindemann's specialities. She couldn't afford it, but in her present circumstances she could afford anything, everything. She was determined to look really nice when she made her first wish. And it would give her a chance to think without being disturbed. With all those things clamped to her head she would be able to let fancy run free, for the queer thing about her bargain was that she simply could not settle on what her three wishes were to be. Almost as if the Devil had stolen her power of making up her mind. Not that that had ever been a strong point with Barbara Frant.

She had been at Sindemann's the best part of three hours, sunk in a glorious, dreamy sort of coma. Light fingers had touched her; soft voices had addressed her; a kind of infernal machine, terribly scientific looking, had been suspended above her head. And all the time there was mounting in her heart the realization of unlimited wealth, of power that would place her far beyond the reach of disaster; of love that would be hers for the asking; of handsome men, marble baths, champagne, great white bedrooms —

The light fingers were touching her again, removing with infinite care the metal that gripped her hair. Barbara was aware of the reflection of Sindemann who was standing behind her chair, smiling. The last of the clips had been loosed; she gazed at her reflection and knew that she was lovely. An aureole of gold, a cluster of fair curls; red, pouting lips and eyes that were dancing with mischief.

"How I wish it could stay like that always," she said, bowing slightly to the mirror.

Was it fancy, or did she feel a quick tightening of the top of her scalp, as though something had gripped it?

"It is pleasant to hear Madame wish that."



Sindemann could not understand why his charming customer, Miss Frant, turned round and abused him when he said that. She not only abused him, but burst into tears and had to be sent home in a cab. And he might have been even more puzzled had he seen her, half an hour later, sitting on her bed and expressing, in a loud and clear voice, a series of the most preposterous wishes.

"I wish I had three million pounds."

"I wish I could make any man fall in love with me."

"I wish I could be in two places at once."

"I wish I was the only woman in the world."

"I wish it was always summer."

"I wish —— I wish —— I wish —— "

Barbara Frant buried her face in the pillow and gave herself up to a tempest of sobbing. At length she sat up, and then, with determination, she went to the bathroom and washed her hair. She washed it with hot water and with cold; she oiled it and combed it and brushed it till her head ached. At the end of an hour, she looked at herself in the glass. Her face, for all her tears, was the perfection of loveliness; crisp yellow curls made an aureole about her forehead. She cursed her reflection, and, going back to the bedroom, pulled the curtains and went to bed.

For the first time in her life Barbara Frant knew the meaning of responsibility. She slept intermittently, dreaming uneasily and waking to a vague recollection of impending trouble. Dawn of the second day found her in a deep sleep from which she did not wake till past ten. She rose and ate, surprised to find how hungry she was. The day was fine, but she had no intention of going out. She would stay in her own room, sitting by the window, till her mind was made up.

And there she sat, watching the passers-by, drumming with her fingers on the sill. She took down the mirror from the wall; there was something in the perfection of her image there which got on her nerves. Taking out a notebook, she tried to make a list of the things which she most desired; covered two pages and then, in disgust, flung the thing across the room. No, she would sit there, savouring the joy of future accomplishment; she would sit, till the light began to fade and then, as evening came stealing over London, she would go walking like a queen or a millionaire or what ever it might be; walking through the town under the canopy of night. But why walk? She could have fifty Rolls Royces, if she felt inclined.

When the bell rang, she started. Had the Devil come back so soon? But he didn't bother to ring. Reluctantly, she got up and went to the door. Tony Candish was there, in dress clothes, with a white flower in his coat.

"My dear old thing," he said, kissing her, "I thought you'd gone to a nunnery. Where have you been, these last few days? Come along, slip on the glad rags and have dinner with me. I'll wait while you change. Then we'll do a show and supper at my place; just us two. It'll be like old times. What's the matter? Here, I say, let me come in!"

He was across the threshold; his arms were round her; the scent of the white flower was sickly-sweet. In vain Barbara protested. His answer was to close the door and pour out upon her a stream of endearments. The words came tumbling, slurred with the fire of his longing.

"Tony, Tony, I do wish you'd shut up!"

It was very odd, the sudden silence, like the switching off of a light. Tony stood there, staring at her, not saying a word, and yet his eyes were still bright

with desire. But not a word. Silence. Complete silence.

Twice he opened his lips, but no sound came and then he turned away. With a quick lunge Barbara pushed him out into the passage and slammed the door. She stood listening till she heard him go. Then she went back to her room and broke all the ornaments on the mantelshelf, methodically, one by one, starting with the image of the Mannikin from Brussels that had once amused her so much.

The third day brought reaction. Barbara was seized with a fancy that she had begun to learn from experience. But, more than ever, was she unable to make up her mind. Only one wish left. Then it must be a portmanteau wish, holding no end of things.

She went out early and spent the day in town, looking at shops, trying on hats, walking in the Park. Yet all the time she was only half aware of her surroundings because of the turmoil in her heart. By tea-time she was weary, but she felt she could not go back to the flat. If only there were some one to help her; some one who could advise her. The sight of a telephone box made up her mind for her and luck was on her side, just for once. Christopher Nairne answered the call himself. It might so easily have been that tiresome new wife of his.

"That you, Chris? Look here, I don't want to be a nuisance, but I'm in a bit of a fix, and you're the one person who can help me. What? No, I know I mustn't come to your house, but can't we meet somewhere? Where? Oh, there. Yes, I'll be waiting. It's nothing, really but I do want to see you. Good-bye."

Of all her men, Christopher had been the best; the one who could be relied on utterly. If only he hadn't taken it into his head to go and get married! But

he was at the rendez-vous, to the minute, and they went up to the little private room that Barbara had seen so often before. Only now, somehow, it looked different — just the least little bit shabby. But Christopher was there.

“Look here, old thing, I’m running no end of a risk, doing this. If Joan were to find out, there’d be the devil of a row. And it is all over between you and me. I thought we had it all out long ago. What is it? Are you hard up, or what?”

All the old longing, the old, happy sense of comradeship, came sweeping over her. Christopher was still the same; kindly, chivalrous, ready to hold out a helping hand, even at the risk of his own happiness. Only now there was a barrier between them, the barrier of his marriage. Why hadn’t he asked her to marry him? But then, why should he? She supposed he had never even thought of her in that way. Friend, dance partner, mistress, if you like; but, wife? No! He had chosen some one from another world. She had never seen this Joan of his; she hoped she never would. Suppose she were to see her and find she was kind and lovely; that would make it ten times worse.

“Come on, Barbara, what is it?”

Christopher was impatient. She supposed he was afraid of her, lest she should be holding back something from their past, to use as a threat against him. If only he knew, if only he could guess. Now that the moment had come she had not the courage to tell him. It would sound so ridiculous; he would never believe. He would think she had gone crazy. But so would every one. Not after she had made her wish, though, not when she was rich and powerful.

“Chris, dear, if I do tell you, you’ll only laugh at me. It’s mad. It’s all wrong —”

NEVILLE BRAND

She longed to touch him, to feel the comfort of his arms round her. She was terribly afraid, not of her bargain, but of looking absurd. Christopher came and sat by her side on the little red sofa and laid an arm round her shoulders, just as he had done in the old days. Barbara felt herself slipping back through time and then she looked up and saw his eyes and she knew those times could never come back again. They had gone.

"Christopher, dear one," she wailed, "I'm the unhappiest thing alive. I wish I'd never been born!"

The state of never having been born is difficult to realize; to describe it is impossible. Barbara Frant was suddenly aware of being somewhere where there was neither up nor down, left nor right; where past and future were all one. She was aware, too, of vague things, like falling leaves, which drifted past, brushing against her face and resting lightly on her hands. There was no sound, unless the drifting things set up a faint kind of whispering. She rose, fell, turned and drifted, all in one eternal instant.

Then she became aware of the Devil, hovering near. He seemed to be interested in the drifting things, for every now and then he took one between his fingers and examined it. Then he came close to her and took her by the wrist and said :

"You have made a mess of things! You'd better come along out of this, or there'll be trouble. They're looking for you already in London."

The dimness began to grow less dim. The fingers that held her grew warm and a wind came, blowing from all sides at once. The next thing that Barbara knew was that she and the Devil were in her own room, in her own flat, and outside the sun was shining and cars were hooting and people were moving.

"I must say," he remarked. "You've disappointed



me, but then so do most people. They will not take the trouble to think."

He stood, with his head on one side, looking at her and she tried to smile and be apologetic.

"I'm awfully sorry," she said. "I did try, you know."

There was a long pause. The Devil tugged at his moustache.

"And now, I suppose you want my soul?" said Barbara.

"If you please. Now, don't be frightened. I'm not going to hurt you. Stand still and be a good girl and you won't feel it come out. It's the people who will wriggle that get hurt."

He laid a hand on her shoulder and with the other he began to stroke her head. Barbara closed her eyes and held her breath. When she looked again, the Devil's expression was queer. He seemed to be worried.

"Is there something wrong?" she asked.

"Well, I don't quite know. It certainly—I mean, would you consider me very rude if I asked you to undress?"

Barbara hoped that she blushed when she said, "Yes, she would," and would he mind just turning his back while she slipped off her things. With so distinguished a man, one couldn't really refuse. After all, one undressed for a doctor and thought nothing of it.

The Devil cheered up quite a lot when she told him he could turn round and get on with it, though he made no remark beyond a gentle, "Thank you." From somewhere he produced a stethoscope with which he sounded her thoroughly. And he looked at her tongue, and under it; he looked into her eyes; he

examined the palms of her hands and the soles of her feet and then he sighed and put away the stethoscope.

"It's a very singular thing," he said, in a tone of resignation, "but you're another of them. The fifth one I've met this year. It must be infectious. Why, one in a century used to be considered excessive. I suppose you had no idea of your condition when we made our bargain?"

Barbara did blush at that. She grabbed at the quilt from the bed and wrapped it round herself.

"My condition?" she stammered.

"That's what I said. It's ridiculous. In future I shall have to have a preliminary medical examination."

"But, please, what are you talking about? Am I ill or something?"

The Devil stalked towards the door and frowned.

"Don't you understand, you silly girl? You haven't got a soul at all. They're going out of fashion, that's what it is!"

And he passed through the closed door in a dither of flame.

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### THE AESTHETIC EMOTION AS USEFUL

The belief that man is perfectible would not have arisen in a society lacking the tradition of man's depravity. The birth of the later belief depended on the existence of the earlier one. Is poetry similarly dependent on science? Anthropologists assure us that once upon a time art and science, and more particularly poetry and science, were one. Even now, so they say, science is the proper element of poetry, systematized and made predictable. Whatever that means, until the end of the seventeenth century, poetry was as much an unquestioned member of the intellectual community as philosophy and mathematics. Thereupon, however, poetry began to lose ground before the spectacular triumphs of scientific method, and it has continued to lose ground ever since. I believe, indeed, that if poetry survives to-day, although so evidently an art with which one cannot "cash in," it is thanks to the theory that poetry is not only quite different from science, but is in its essence opposed to science and so must be let go its own way.

Yet to-day that theory is no longer very assured. An apt early statement in modern language of the modern position of poetry in the community is Shelley's *Defence of Poetry*. That is a landmark of criticism. With a power of synthesis vouchsafed to few minds, Shelley put in one sentence the problem poetry had to confront, when he said, "Our calculations have

outrun conception." By "calculations" he meant science as it is known to-day—ideas susceptible to measurable demonstration; by "conception" he meant what we loosely call "intuition" or the perception of the value of "calculations" as human experience. Subsequent critics have not greatly improved upon the view expressed in that sentence. It embodies what is still our way of looking at science and poetry—and, in fact, at science and the arts—respectively. But where-as Shelley deemed it the privilege of "conception" to settle the degree of value to be placed upon "calculations" *qua* human experience, we constantly warn the artist, and more particularly the poet, that he must abandon metaphysical isolation and bow down to "calculations" if he wishes to preserve a position among us. For poetry, we say, is a kind of action; like everything else, it must "make good," and it can only "make good" according to a standard of action.

The suggestion here is a difficult one to fathom. I do not pretend to be able to fathom it. Indeed, the purpose of this essay is negative. It would not be my intention to set forth any principles of art, or of science, or of social action, even if I understood them. I want simply to ask the meaning of some statements made about art by Mr. John Dewey, our leading American philosopher. They are statements contained in his recent book *Philosophy and Civilization* and in that chapter of this book called "Affective Thought" (pp. 117-125).

Mr. Dewey justly deplores in the chapter in question that the poet should be at odds with our scientific society. Seeing that the arts tend to be banished from this society the while they cling to what appear in that society's eyes to be outworn feelings and attitudes, he thinks the remedy is to restore the arts to the living current of our life by giving the "conception" of

art a meaning in terms of the modern world's "calculations." And he tries to effect this remedy. The notion prompting him is, like the suggestion I mentioned above, a difficult one to grasp. It might be the notion that poetry is to dictate to society. More likely, the notion that poetry must reflect the contemporary scientific and social action. I believe that, actually, Mr. Dewey's notion of the relation of the two is a compromise in behalf of neither science nor art, but in behalf of what he conceives to be human society. The general question I have to deal with is, then, this : If, as it seems to me, Mr. Dewey wishes to bring the arts closer to life solely on his own terms, are those terms acceptable ?

He considers naturally enough—or he would not take up the matter—that art should be re-endowed with its former prestige. But the desideratum raises questions. How is the prestige to be recovered ? Art is now off on an unsocial tangent, but can we be certain that by providing it with a deliberate programme of socialization we shall bring it back ? And, further, what is it that has to be set right ? If it is society, there is surely the danger that art will be destroyed in the process. On the other hand, I do not see how, if it is art which needs to be set right, it can be society that will put it right. Anyhow, the opinion seems to be that art is not to be adjusted to modern life on terms inherent in the work of art. It is the work of art which on the contrary will have to be changed to suit the scientific method, a method which in social life means the collective, the socially workable and "good."

But, assuming that there is a social science, this observes the individual person and the individual object only in so far as both share certain constant features with other individual persons and individual objects. The aim is to have a collective person and

a collectively envisaged object. Hence, before one can give the "conception" of art a meaning in terms of the modern world's "calculations," as Mr. Dewey attempts to do, one has to ascertain if art is at all concerned with the collective person and the collectively envisaged object. We must find out if art can have as its specific function to decide upon the constant features of experience and to put them into practical form.

These things Mr. Dewey does not face. I shall try to show from his own words that he has accepted the function of art in society as having been historically only one of the things it may have been. Because art is, in all its variety, the supreme expression-form of a human society, he regards the value of art as lying in its being a manifestation of the collective impulse. To my mind, his justification of art is this—and it is a kind of would-be justification that makes art seem more futile than ever—that the desire for right social action should be the exclusive motive for writing poetry, painting pictures, composing sonatas, and sculpturing. He practically pictures the artist as saying, "Society is disorganized. Lo! I will unify it with my art." But it is very easy to realize that this is nonsense. For even if one grants that art may balance our minds or unify a particular mind beyond the moment during which that mind inspects a particular work of art; even if one grants the contention of Mr. I. A. Richards that poetry has the power of "ordering" our minds; one still has nothing to lead one to the conclusion that this supposed order, or ordering power, of art is tantamount to a social order.

Mr. Dewey's attitude to art may be interpreted in two ways. One may take it as being the view that art and action are related. Or it may be taken as a view having value for approaching works of art. In the latter case, it would be the attitude that art is



action, that art has some bearing on action to the extent that it is a perception of the "qualitative whole" of an event. But then it would be a view reposing on a harmless tautology. For if you say, "Art is action," your words can only mean either that art is art or that action is action. In the former case, however, the attitude would be vague and dangerous. For then we should have to recognize that Mr. Dewey was trying to identify a particular artistic intention with a general feeling for social values, and the fact is that in the work of art these values defy definition. Their practical consequences, if they have any, cannot be charted and controlled. When the scientific formula  $H_2O$  is demonstrated, nothing is involved on the part of the individual scientist who demonstrates it. But the formula, "Art is socially valuable," cannot be demonstrated in that way. Indeed, it cannot be demonstrated at all. It can only be asserted in a given particular case. For the proof that art is socially valuable has nothing to do with the actual character of all works of art or of one work of art. The proof depends on some notion of the socially good which is never to be deduced from the character of art itself or of a particular work of art. And the individual artist, or any other individual, who declares that the socially valuable is so-and-so assumes a responsibility most people would hesitate to assume. Rousseau's *Emile* had no social value when it was first published. Since, it has influenced educational theory and practice, and forms of society have arisen indirectly as the result of the book which lead us to say vaguely that *Emile* has been made pragmatically good. Thus the only fixed social value assignable to *Emile* is that it is both socially valuable and socially negligible. At one time it was useless; at another time it has been useful.

It is the conception of art as a *general* form of

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action, and not as a realm of specific objects—pictures, poems, sonatas, buildings—that I find at the root of Mr. Dewey's aesthetics. He says, for example :

It then becomes possible to break down the traditional separation between scientific and intellectual systems and those of art, and also *to further the application of the principle of integration* to the relationship of those elements of culture which are so segregated in our present life—to science, art in its variety of forms, industry and business, religion, sport and morals (*italics mine*).

For this passage to be intelligible, we must understand the nature of the "principle of integration" it mentions. For that principle to be valid in Mr. Dewey's own Instrumentalism, it must be a *concrete* principle. It must account for the definite integration of certain concrete factors of social life. If the principle is to be applied through art, we must ask how the integrating art is to do is done. Possibly Mr. Dewey would say that art must be organically, practically, functionally, rooted in the central impulse of society. But that is merely to state the condition of its integration. Apparently it not only has to be integrated, but to do some integrating as well. And what one wants to know is how it can integrate. The point may be insisted upon by referring to Mr. Dewey's "faith in intelligence," a faith he expounds in that interesting book of his, *The Quest for Certainty*. Presumably intelligence too, just like art, is expected to integrate, and we may ask how it does so. For either intelligence does integrate individually and collectively, or the word "intelligence" is only a synonym for integration. The fact is that, much to the pleasure no doubt of the shades of Michelet, Taine, and Renan, and—who knows?—to the satisfaction of the Standard Oil Company as well,

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Mr. Dewey argues in this chapter "Affective Thought" I am considering that art and science are merely conventionally different modes of social adaptation among several really similar modes; and we are led to suppose that art-science-religion-industry-business-sport-morals is thought by him to integrate its own vast qualitative wholeness.

Now I turn to two other passages. The first is as follows :

The fact that this more subtle and complete integration [of painting] usually involves deformation or distortion of familiar forms—that is, conflicts with associations formed outside the realm of painting—accounts for the fact that they are greeted at first with disdainful criticism.

The other runs thus :

[Art] is such a deep and abiding experience of the nature of fully harmonized experience as sets a standard or forms a habit for all other experiences.

These two passages confront one with a puzzle. Take an instance of "associations formed outside the realm of painting"—in physics, say, or in any science. Since the associations of art are here in some sense special to art, the associations of physics, or of any other science, must be, at least in relation to painting, special also. How are two such kinds of special associations related? Mr. Dewey does not tell us. Nor does he tell us if each kind is valid. Throughout his career as a philosopher Mr. Dewey has developed the idea of social action proceeding on the basis of verified knowledge, knowledge that will collectively work, and this kind of knowledge, if it exists, is science. As we have seen, for Mr. Dewey art is only another kind of science, and since its associations are

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apparently special to its own realm, this raises the question whether these associations can benefit by a special form of verification. For unless art is verified, or verifiable, knowledge—and then its associations must in some way be verifiable—art cannot be only another kind of science.

I am driven to hark back to the principle of integration. It really seems that, although for Mr. Dewey's views it is necessary that art and science should somehow be the same, it is also necessary that they should be different in order that art may be, as he claims it is, the integrating principle effecting "a fully harmonized experience." I shall say nothing about the presence in the argument of a Pragmatist of the Idealistic unity-in-variety notion of aesthetic effect, although, of course, I might point out the lack of "fully harmonized experience" in a work of art called *Hamlet* or raise the problem whether there is in *Lycidas* any experience whatever. It is enough that we are as much in the dark as before concerning how the harmonized experience which Mr. Dewey declares art to be can promote harmony in individual persons or in the collective person of the State.

Mr. Dewey says that art "sets a standard or forms a habit for all other experiences." But he neglects to describe the kind of standard or habit that is thus set or formed. He can scarcely contend that the habit is the habit of looking at "life" as one looks at a painting. Since the Pragmatist is so fond of Occam's razor, it seems to me that he should admit the habit formed by literature to be merely the habit of reading. For my part, I frankly do not believe that the "associations" of art, while undoubtedly they do "affect" action, do more than trickle off minutely, unpredictably, and uncontrollably, into the total quality of society. For them to be controlled socially,

Mr. Dewey would have to set up a censorship capable of successfully prescribing people's aesthetic associations in advance.

In this same chapter entitled "Affective Thought," Mr. Dewey says : " Integration in the object [i.e. the art object] permits and secures a corresponding integration of organic activities." This is pure dogma. " A new line," he continues, " is built up, formed on the basis of unalloyed aesthetic experiences." This leads me to wonder whither—if the experiences are, as he says, "unalloyed," i.e. pure of action and unique—the new line leads. Is it to the Ivory Tower? I wonder too if the "corresponding integration of organic activities" is similarly "unalloyed," for in that case it would surely be socially useless. The suspicion creeps over me that Mr. Dewey is actually seeking to get out of art some fixed, objective, and authoritative standard which will provide a transcendent sanction for a world which is otherwise entirely sheer action. But one does not see how, for Pragmatism, there could be such a standard. In any case, it is not to be allowed that a habit could be a valid standard. Mr. Dewey is indeed arguing in a maze of cross-purposes. He naturally desires content for his "faith in intelligence," and seems to have picked on art to help simply because nobody knows much about art. For the habits of art to be good the art must of course be good. As I said earlier, that leaves open the question of what is good art. It remains for Mr. Dewey to shoulder the responsibility of settling what is good art. Then, by "habit" he means, needless to say, "right habit" or "good social habit." But I fear that habits of that kind will only be integrated in society after Mr. Dewey has selected them for society. This being the task his argument calls for, it begins to look as if Mr. Dewey's integrating principle must be no

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other than Mr. Dewey himself and his "faith in intelligence" simply faith in Mr. Dewey.

I fall into such pleasantry because I fear that the public looks on Mr. Dewey as having settled the questions of what is his integrating principle and of what he means by "faith in intelligence." How far, however, he is from having done so, one more passage will help to make evident :

...The statement of an objective criterion of value in paintings *set forth for the first time by Mr. Barnes* will make possible in time an adequate psychological, even physiological, analysis of aesthetic responses in spectators, so that the appreciation of paintings will no longer be a matter of private, absolute tastes and ipse dixits (*italics mine*).

Without inquiring how a private taste can be absolute, I confidently assert that neither Mr. Barnes—whom Mr. Dewey has obviously read—nor Mr. I. A. Richards is the first to put forward the Utilitarian theory of art. Its fathers are Bentham and Mill. No doubt Mr. Richards, in his *Principles of Literary Criticism*, is its ablest living defender. His belief that art, more particularly the art of poetry, may be in its power of "ordering" experience the means of saving civilization is on all fours with Mr. Dewey's view that "integration in the object permits and secures a corresponding integration of organic activities." On the theory, art appeals to and organizes the greatest number of desires in the individual, and thereupon passes into the greatest happiness of the greatest number of persons. Now, it seems to me that there is a reason for this queer revival of utilitarian aestheticism, according to which art is the centre of life in virtue of its supreme utility, and the reason is, I believe, more interesting than the theory itself.

That reason is the decline of organized religion. Of this decline philosophers are so frightened that



they readily pick up as great a "superstition" under another name.\* Mr. Dewey's theory of the integrative power of art attributes to art all the psychological virtue of a religion, and he welcomes it as possessing that virtue because thereupon, lacking all dogma, it is unaffected by the disadvantages now suffered by religion proper. Art has not been battered to a pulp by the historical method. True, it has been discredited by the laboratory, with which it cannot compete; but it has no inconvenient politics, and it is still respectable enough to be revived, especially if the philosopher who revives it can successfully allege that it has really been useful and scientific all the time. In short, I find that Mr. Dewey's *Philosophy and Civilization* makes of art a makeshift religion and that he puts it forward as such with the purpose of destroying it itself.

That sounds pretty strong. But let me explain. I have pointed out that Mr. Dewey's aesthetics are either a tautology or an attempt to reduce art to common features of experience which may be repeated and used in collective enterprise. Mr. Dewey protests at one moment that art is "different"—for that is his foundation of an at least momentary faith—only in the next moment to withdraw his protest. He withdraws it when he identifies art, science, and religion, as "satisfying the same fundamental needs," for to do that he describes them all as action. If the arts are to maintain no specific forms which are inviolable, and if they are to be valued solely for their practical consequences, we get the formula, "All art is action," and the converse—which is astonishing

\* I suggest for the reader's consideration the kinship I find between Mr. Dewey's "principle of integration" and "faith in intelligence" and Mr. Walter Lippmann's "scientific disinterestedness," as developed in the latter's *A Preface to Morals*. What new and thrilling names our age has found for Jesus Christ!

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—that “All action is art.” It is thus that art, art itself, is destroyed, at least in the mind of our leading American philosopher. For what Mr. Dewey is asking us to practise and enjoy is not art, or science or religion, or even business, sport, and morals. He is asking us to practise simply society. I leave the analysis of this Gargantuan proposal to those whom it may entertain.

In the domain of aesthetics, the conclusion to which one is led by the Instrumental Philosophy is that we should yield to an intellectual anarchy for the sake of a kind of collective enterprise which it neglects to define. Mr. Dewey's criterion for action is right habits based on verified knowledge—perhaps, also, the verified habits of art!—and the special form of this criterion is at once art and not-art, science and not-science. No doubt it is lamentable that our culture-forms, our methods and techniques, are not organically related. There can be no surprise at such a deficiency having worried William James's best pupil, Mr. Dewey. Yet, in seeking to remedy it, he reveals himself to be but a fake mystic. He would ignore the material of life, the concrete forms of the intelligence, in his desire to seize a mystical unity underlying them. In his case, however, this mystical unity is entirely his own. It lacks all objective content. One may grant to it the subjective content of the philosopher's prejudices and desires, and of his insight into the human spirit. But its having this still leaves it quite private. As such, it is an irresponsible abstraction.

Finally, it remains that Pragmatist aesthetics can be hoisted with their own petard. They are open to this objection, that, lacking the sense of aesthetic form in one of the chief kinds of action—art—they are not “pragmatic” enough.

## JOSEPHINE HERBST

### I SAW YOUR LIGHT

We ran into Russ one winter night by accident. He was walking along the other side of the narrow street very fast without a hat. We were going slowly, and Tom said, "Say, isn't that that Irish guy we knew last year—what's his name? Russ something?"

"It walks like him," I said. Tom crossed the street. "I'll just follow him and ask him if he isn't Russ." The fellow stopped, and the two shook. Then they called me. I remembered him the minute I was close to him. He was the sleepy fellow who sat at the end of the table, drinking hard and not talking much the night we sat around in Mosely's room. I couldn't remember a thing about him except that he had been to sea.

"Russ wants us to come up to his place and meet his girl. Say, Russ, we were asking about you the other night. Gus said no one saw anything of you any more."

"I've been living pretty quiet," Russ said.

"Jeez, you ought to see your friends now and then," Tom said. "What you trying to do? Drop out of the world?"

"No," Russ said, and he had a very pleasant confidential voice. "No, I don't know how it happens that you don't see people, but you see, Rose and I, we've been living together, and I just quit going to the old places."

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We went on up. They lived down an alley in a tall thin-walled tenement. All the way up the five flights you could hear noises from other apartments. Some one was picking out a tune on a guitar; there was loud laughing going on behind doors on the third; and on the fourth the only sound was the plodding of a typewriter by some one slow on the keys.

"Getting tired?" Russ said, looking back and grinning. "We like it on top: it's the cheapest floor and quiet." His broad back mounted the stairs without effort, and before he opened his door he waited for us. Then he pushed it open. "This is Rose."

Rose came forward and shook. She was several inches taller than Russ, with a handsome, untidy head. It was a cold night, but her arms were bare in a plain black dress. They were very firm arms and her hands were really shapely and beautiful. The room was stripped of almost everything but a fire in the grate and an old upright piano. It was very clean. The floor was bare and the boards as clean as in a ship. There was a wide doorway opening into another room, and as far as could be seen nothing there but clothes on hooks and a bed. The one chair had no back, and a few pots and pans hung near the fireplace beside a box covered neatly with a piece of oilcloth.

"We haven't much furniture," Rose said, smiling. "But I guess it doesn't matter."

"I haven't been working," Russ said. "Rose is keeping us."

"I'm keeping him," Rose said proudly. "He was working on those subways, digging all day, and at night he'd come home filthy dirty and dead tired. Too tired for any use. I couldn't have that."

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"She bought me a typewriter too," said Russ. "I've been trying to write a little."

"Gee, Russ! You ought to write out that sea stuff you were telling about one night—not that night at Mosely's. I forget. Where was it?"

"Jack's bar," said Russ.

"That's it—Jack's bar. Say, I remember that stuff. It was first rate. You ought to write it."

"That's what I tell Russ. He's just throwing away his talent. But he shouldn't drink so much," Rose said.

"I haven't been drinking for a year," Russ said.

"He hasn't been drinking like he used to since he met me," Rose said.

"Say," Russ said, "that's a fact. Rose brings home gin and we drink it here, but I haven't been out to get drunk for a year. I cut that out."

"Maybe you shouldn't get started to-night, Russ, but I thought we might get a bottle of wine—just a little you know," Tom said.

"You girls wait here," Russ said.

The two men went down the stairs and we squatted down. "My, Russ is glad to see you," Rose said. "He hasn't been seeing any one for a long time. I don't know how it is: we just never go out. Last winter, when I had pneumonia and nearly died, Russ wired my mother, and she thought it was awful the way she found me. You'd think she'd always lived in a first-class hotel the way she carried on. And we didn't dare let her know about Russ. He had to sleep anywhere he could get a flop, and be careful not to use any bad words. He nearly went crazy."

She had a way of spreading out her hands to the fire and then drawing them in as she talked in that hoarse broken down chorus-girl voice of hers. Later on, we found out she'd been in vaudeville and in

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about everything else from cafeterias to artists' studios as a model. But that night she looked and even talked with the quality of inexperience. She looked about twenty-five, but afterwards, when he was begging her to marry him and have a baby, she said she was every inch of thirty-seven.

The men came back, and in that few minutes they had managed to swallow enough liquor to get a little edge on.

"What's Rose do?" Tom asked, as they heated the wine in a little saucepan.

"Listen, Rose," Russ said. "Play for them. Say, she can play the piano—you ought to hear her. She's a fine musician."

"Oh, I'm all out of practice now," Rose said.

"I never knew what music could do to you before," Russ said. "Say, we've had our supper here and then Rose has played, and the way she plays—it does something to me. She's a damned good artist too. Show Tom your drawings, Rose."

"Listen to him," said Rose, pleased. "I picked it up in the studios seeing them do it. It looked so easy to me I just picked it up. I never had any lessons." She went into the bedroom and came back with a dirty old portfolio. She drew out a few sheets and began shuffling through them. "My best stuff's not here."

"Gus told her to take it around to the magazines, said they'd use some of it for tail pieces," said Russ. "It's clever stuff, don't you think so, Tom? Show them that one of the café."

"Well, I don't know as it's so good," said Rose holding it out. Tom took it and looked surprised. "Say, it's really good stuff. Gee whizz, Rose, that's good!" She had gotten two girls and a man in a café lolling over the table, and the man making up to the one girl is eyed by the other girl with slow-



eaten jealousy under indifference. I don't know how she got all that in, but it was there, and Rose didn't even know it.

Her piano playing was pretty bad. The piano was out of tune and we had to listen to several pieces, all difficult and about on the level of a little girl showing off for company. Russ stirred and called for his special number.

"Oh, they don't want to hear that," said Rose. She sat on the stool smiling; she smiled a great deal in a warm living way that was childish and friendly and yet almost purely sexual. The longer we remained in that room, the surer Rose seemed to be a woman suggesting sex more than art. But during the early part of our visit Russ was anxious to have Rose appear with all her talents. She played Russ's piece. It may have been some sentimental Irish ditty. I believe Rose was Irish too.

"God! that's great," Russ said, and you could see he thought it was great. "Say, isn't it funny how certain things remind you of others that haven't any connexion with them at all? She plays that piece, and when she stops I come to myself with a start. I think of the night we were going through the Kiel Canal. One of the fellows on the ship, he was shovelling coal with me down below, had a mother living near the locks. He hadn't seen her in ten years and he wrote her to be on the watch for his ship and be down to the locks to see him. We stopped this side for coaling and he figured he could get off and see her. He kept talking about it and worrying us about it, and did we think his mother would get his letter. She got the letter all right, we heard afterwards, and she had a neighbour read it to her. She was pretty old and might never see him again. He was excited all that day and kept talking about when he was a kid; and sure enough we hit the locks

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around midnight. He said that wouldn't matter, she'd be there when the ship was there, no matter what hour it was. He was awfully nervous and a shy kid, but at last he got up nerve to ask leave to go ashore during the coaling. It was during the War, in 1918, and they were awfully strict. They wouldn't let him off the ship. He could stand up on deck though. Well, it was pitch dark, I never saw a blacker night, and that big tub of ours loomed up like a mountain. I can just see him way up high, a tiny speck, and the old woman down down below, a tiny speck, he waving a lantern and she running around with her lantern. All they could see of one another was just two tiny lights waving at each other in the dark.

"He came down all cried up and wouldn't talk for days. But he got a letter from her written by a neighbour and you know, by God ! she was grateful she had seen his light. I saw you wave the lantern, she says, thank God ! I saw your light."

Rose had been sitting on the piano stool while Russ was talking, and her eyes never left his face. She must have heard that story twenty times, but she listened enthralled.

"Can you imagine ? " she said, smiling and giving a deep sigh, as she turned towards us when the story was finished. "Can you just imagine ? "

"You know," Russ said. "The sea sticks in your system. Sometimes when I'm here, with the window open, I think I can smell it so strong that when I look out and see a wall instead, it's a shock. It's funny about this room. I'm alone all day and everything I ever saw or did runs through my head sharper and brighter then when it was happening. I seem to realize it more. Until she comes home I am in the stoke-hole, or I am opening the door of a flop house and I smell that stale stink from the big filthy room

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and through the opening crack see the dwarf with his shirt up scratching his skin. Jesus Christ! I was ashamed to live off her the way I'm doing at first, but what else can I do just now—all the new men on the excavation job were laid off. I've never been trained for anything but the sea and I only know stoking coal there. I'd dig if there was digging to do."

"I don't see why he should when we get along, do you?" Rose said.

"Why, you'd be a fool, Russ. This is a swell chance for you. You ought to write some of that stuff."

"I'm trying to," Russ said. "Did you ever stop to think that the vital part of the ship was below the water line, and yet who bothers to write about what goes on down here? It's all moonlight on the sea, and that kind of crap. Say, I've been a whole voyage without seeing one ray of moonlight."

There was no more wood and the two men went down to the courtyard to break up some old crates. Rose filled both our glasses and said confidentially, "I think it's doing Russ a lot of good to see you folks. He feels bad because he isn't working, but he doesn't need to. And I don't mind not having furniture—it's all the less to dust, is what I say." She laughed and poured the last of the wine into the little saucepan to heat. "Tastes good, this stuff, doesn't it?"

"Fine, but I'm afraid we're finishing it."

"I was drinking too much myself before I met Russ. Gin. I didn't want to, but I did. I was working in a cafeteria then and I'd get so dead tired standing on my feet. I'm behind a counter now, over at that little bakeshop where they sell French pastries. It's easier." She waited until the wine was bubbling, then searched through the box covered with

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oilcloth. "Got all my spices in here," she said. "Let's put in some cloves and cinnamon." The pungent smell made the room seem warmer. Rose drank hers very fast, and by the time the men came back her glass was empty.

They had met Gus Wembler on the third floor coming out of an apartment, and they brought him back with them. They had a bottle of rum and they had all had a drink on the stairs and were feeling very lively. Gus came in grinning, with his bright-coloured face and his thin fluffy hair standing on end. He shook with the girls and sat kicking his heels while Russ and Tom heated the rum. Rose said nothing about drinking the last of the wine, and I noticed that on that night she only sipped at her drinks unless the men were out of the room.

It didn't take much to warm up the three men. They began to shout about the German beer and German girls, and Russ told about a night in Hamburg in a café where a really swell girl in a fur coat had singled him out. He had gone home with her and nearly missed his ship.

"It was the depression," he said. "The mark was falling and everything was cock-eyed. That girl wouldn't act like that in normal times. She had a tiny apartment all to herself with a satin cover on the bed and a bathtub ten feet long. I can see her now, looking at me with her wild eyes glittering over the shoulders of a couple of German dummies she was with. She just got up and walked out on them, and she wasn't a whore either."

"When a German woman is bad, she's bad," says Gus.

"When any woman's bad, she's bad," Russ says.

"You guys don't know what you're talking about," Rose said. She wasn't argumentative, she was smiling

and leaning back indifferently, but you could see she meant it.

"They talk like little boys, don't they?" she said to me, leaning down confidentially.

"Oh, we do, do we?" said Gus. "Hear that, Russ?"

"Say, did I tell you how Rose and I got together?" Russ said, turning to Tom and me. "It was one night last winter, not long after I saw you at Mosely's. I was out of a job then too, and looking pretty seedy. I thought I'd go to the baths to spruce myself and I was just coming back with my wet towel and soap wrapped up in a newspaper, when I saw Rose. She passed me, so big and fresh, and I says to myself, 'There goes my woman.' She stopped to look in a window and I came up to her. She looked friendly, but wouldn't have anything to do with me. I kept right after her, me and my newspaper bundle, and I told her I just wanted to talk with her. We went into a little hole in the wall where that Chinese fellow used to hang out—he's in jail now—and had a drink. Before we knew it we were telling the story of our lives, and, by God! we went home together and stayed together. Hey, Rose?"

"That's right," Rose said.

It was almost the last thing either Rose or I said that night. The party went out of our hands after that, and we sat back in the gallery and let the men run it. They didn't ignore us—you had the feeling there wouldn't have been half the fun if we hadn't been there egging them on. They began talking German and drinking Bruderschaft and with their arms linked in the Bruderschaft they all danced around in a circle until the flimsy floor shook.

With German, Russ and Gus soon became physiological in their talk, and Tom, who did not know all



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the colloquial words, was now and then forced into good old Anglo-Saxon words which, as he explained to us, were the best in the language and all that kept it from being weak and emasculate.

Gus's face grew red and Russ's hair fell into his eyes. Tom's tall lanky form hunched over as he drank *Bruderschaft*. The house trembled with noises—the bellowing of the party below; now, far down, a door slammed, and, in a sudden silence, the slow pecking of that typewriter on the next floor. About three o'clock it grew colder in the room. Falling snow stuck against the dark panes now filming with frost. There was no more wood. Rose got up and took all her cooking utensils out of the wooden box. She folded up the oilcloth. "Here, Russ," she said. "Take this." Then she said to me, "I hate to spoil their fun, don't you?"

The three men put their feet on the box and bracing themselves against each other, stove it in. But the hot fire only made us sleepy. We sat hunched good-naturedly around the blaze, hating to leave. The men were tired and flushed with drinking and yelling, and something of the rawness of their language stirred in us and kept us hanging on so long as the fire lasted and a drop in the bottle remained.

Rose and Russ came out and hung over the railing as we three finally groped down the stairs. The typewriter was still pecking feebly, but the party on the third floor had died before ours. Outside it was very quiet. The snow was thick on the streets, and our voices suddenly sounded muffled.

A week later Gus caught up with us one night on the street. "Hey, what did you guys do to Russ and Rose?"



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"What do you mean?" Tom said.

"Why, they've been raising hell ever since. Russ's been on a three day drunk."

"Say, that's too bad. I hope we didn't start him off."

"No, you didn't. I think they just couldn't keep up that idyllic stuff forever. It's not natural—get me? Anyhow, don't worry about it."

We went around to Russ's a few nights later, but it was a changed place. His eyelids were swollen and he was very quiet. When Rose came home from work she made us stay for supper and we had some kind of stew that had been standing on the fire. With the food Russ cheered up and it almost looked as if we were going to have another good party. But it was never the same.

People began going around to Russ and Rose's and they gradually were dragged out to places. Often the talk was beyond Rose, and she began to push herself to the centre of the stage. It was no fun having the conversation interrupted by one of Rose's long monologues. Russ shut up like a clam as soon as Rose took the floor, and you could feel the tension between the two pulling back and forth. She had a monotonous way about her when she was drinking, and the things that would have been funny said once were tiresome repeated. Every one began to dread Rose's line and to urge Russ to come without her.

Several times he managed to escape, but, sure as fate, later in the evening we heard her climbing the stairs and soon a thump and a loud, "It's Rose." She would enter with her old hat on the back of her head and a mangy fur wrapped round her neck, but there was something about her,—the way she smiled and opened that rag of a fur—that gave the illusion of a beautiful woman.

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The party changed as soon as she entered. She was never, so long as I saw her, jealous of another woman, but she was a fiend to break up any kind of talk that excluded her. When all else failed, she would strike a pose in the centre of the floor and begin a minute description of Russ's accomplishments as a lover. Russ was inclined to be proud the first time, but she did it too often.

No one went to Russ and Rose's any more and no one particularly wanted them at their place.

The next we heard she was running around with a man out of her past and Russ was sleeping in hallways. She had lost her job shortly after that first party and Russ had tried hard to get something to do. He hated to go back to digging, but all he could get was a job helping tear down some tenements near where he and Rose lived. It made Rose sore to have him take a job like that and she sulked all day and even when he hid the money, she'd sneak out and buy gin. One day he saw her talking to a fellow she used to know pretty well and he beat her up. After that it was just a brawl.

Rose was terrific in her going down. She did nothing half-way, and the two of them were two tough giants killing each other off. They'd fight and they'd make love, and then they would have times when they just talked and she'd sit there and reminisce about the men she had known. She never seemed to hold a grudge against one of them, and they never seemed to hold a grudge against her.

Russ got so he didn't feel jealous when Rose talked about her past, and then he knew it was over. He'd even encourage her, and he'd sit there really appreciating the way she talked about the men. She had a

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kind of grateful feeling towards her men that was touching. That one had sent her ten dollars in a letter when she had the flu' and had just about forgot him; another had never used a bad word and had brushed his teeth regularly. Half the time Russ wouldn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

"What about me?" he said once. "I guess I never did anything for you."

"You?" she said, half-crying herself. "Why, you, I've never before known a man who was going to write."

She was serious about it.

Russ tried dodging Rose, but she was very hard to shake. A few nights away from her would drive him back again. He began to think she was the only woman for him, and if they were married it would all be different. Even when she was going to pieces fast, he was begging her to marry him and have children. He was crazy about kids, and she would sit there listening to him describe their home with a good kitchen stove out in the country and a lot of kids running around. She would listen and be tempted and then shake her head slowly.

"What'd we do with them? Put them in the coal box?" she said. "I want to quit having so much hardship. I'm thirty-seven." She was convinced that she had wrecked herself for him, and she began to harp about her age. As he tried to leave her, she slipped more and more into the role of a woman who has been wrecked. Russ couldn't understand it. He was only twenty-four and he saw things in black and white. "I asked her to marry me," he said. "What more can I do?" She was always reminding him that she had bought him the typewriter and he wasn't using it. But he carried it around with him and when he finally hid from Rose, the typewriter was the only thing he took with him.

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Even then, he heard so many wild tales about Rose going to pieces that he was frightened. He wrote her mother in Pittsburg that she was sick and to come and get her. Rose was really sick by the time her mother got there and let herself be led off without a murmur. Russ came out of hiding and lived around on the floors of people's apartments; he would even curl up outside the door near some hallway radiator. He looked like a bum, and every one was depressed to see him.

We didn't see him for weeks. Then he showed up one night, pale and a little thin, but washed and shaved and neat as a pin. Tom shook, and told him he had just been thinking about him. "Say, I was just looking over this book about the old clipper ships and thinking about them. They beat the tubs to-day all hollow."

Russ sat down and began to feel at ease. "Ever notice the names those ships had, Tom? The old captains let themselves go on names. They weren't afraid to see visions in those days. *Star of the Morning*. *Game Cock*. *Flying Cloud*. That was a big era." He seemed subdued, and almost immediately after we had given him a little something to drink—just a nip because it's a cold night, Tom said—he began talking of Rose. He wasn't sure even now if he could live without her.

"I never saw such a woman. Jesus Christ, she got under my skin! She has them all beat. There's something about that woman. But it's a funny thing, after that night you were there, remember, it sort of went to pieces. Probably we were ready for it, and then just after that she lost her job and I couldn't get anything but digging. That was bad."

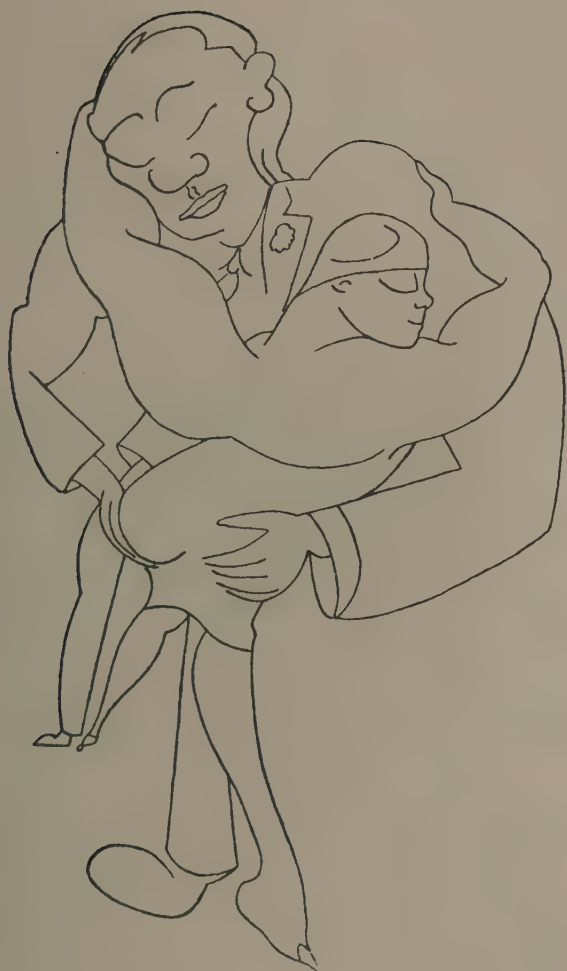
"I hate to think our visit made it," Tom said.

"I don't think it was, Tom. We were ready for it. But for more than a year we didn't have anything

except each other. She'd be gone all day at work and I'd be there alone, and then she'd come home and we'd eat and then we'd go to bed. We had a year of nothing but that."

"You ought to get to your writing," Tom said.

"I'm going to," Russ said. "I've got to pull myself together and find a place to put my typewriter. And I hope things get clear in my mind again the way they were when we were together—Rose, I mean. Everything was sharp and distinct, like a picture. Once I caught myself talking out loud. I thought I was in that flop house in Hamburg and a little dwarf that used to hang out was coming to snatch my shoes. I yelled and then I saw our room, her clothes hanging up and the fireplace with the pots and pans. Jesus," he said, "it wasn't only sleeping with her! Remember how she could play? I can't believe there's an end to that. And when I talk about it, like now, I can feel it coming back. I'm sitting here, but actually I'm in our old place. I can see her dusting that typewriter, proud as Punch, and I can see her hands and her back, and the way she stood when she fixed her hair."



*Drawing by E. E. Cummings*





## ALFRED H. MENDES

### SWEETMAN

Up above the Creole Café in Prince Street the Working-man's Friendly Society was holding a dance. Mamitz and her sweetman, Maxie, were there.

Maxie, in a well-cut tweed suit that fitted him like a glove, was gracefully swinging Mamitz round the room. His wide nostrils gave his face a wild expression; he was, however, thought good-looking by all the women. Anybody could see that he was a *dougla*; in other words, that one of his parents was an East Indian and the other a negro. His black hair, long and curly, clustered about his head in a great tangle. The electric lights shone upon his chocolate-brown face, giving it the look of bronze.

The grey suit he wore, with tie and socks to match, was a present from Mamitz. Indeed, everything Maxie owned had been given to him by Mamitz. It was more than a year since they had been "friending" with each other; and the very first night Maxie had met Mamitz his blood had taken to hers, as he had put it. Her well-shaped body, full-breasted and tall, her sensuous black face, the quick suggestive glances she gave him from small vivid eyes, the swinging way she walked : all this had decided him upon cutting loose from Ethelrida, his keeper at the time, and going over to Mamitz. As a matter of fact, Ethelrida had been growing tired of Maxie; and when, that night

over a year ago, she had seen him for the fourth time ask Mamitz to dance, her lips had curled malignantly and in her eyes there had been a triumphant look. She called him aside and said :

"Maxie, I done wit' you. No row, no scandal. I ain' wan' dat. Go to Mamitz. Look, she tellin' all man on deck how she love you."

But that sort of dismissal, methodical and unemotional, had piqued Maxie. He had intended, when the time came, that *he* should dismiss Ethelrida, not *she* him, so he said :

"Don' talk darm foolishness, Et'el. Dis ain' no time fo' jokin'."

"Buh I ain' jokin'," Ethelrida said. "I in dead earnes'. Look, you been me sweetman long now, t'ree years, an' don' mek a scandal. Ef you in liquor, hol' youself in an' remember all dat pass between us."

"You carn' leave me like dat, Et'el."

"No, so you say. Because I been givin' you everyt'ing you want, you t'ink I mus' give you fo' always. Not dis child, so help me Gord. Go to you Mamitz." And Ethelrida had flounced off, leaving Maxie with his great wide mouth open.

Soon after that Maxie had found himself dancing with Mamitz. He had already had a few drinks, and his head, whirling like a merry-go-round, felt light and empty of all worldly cares. He held Mamitz closely to him and saw her dark face levitating before him, and her white even teeth whenever she looked up to him and smiled.

"Youse a wonderful gerl," he had said.

"An' youse a wonderful songster," Mamitz had replied.

Maxie showed his surprise.

"Whey you hear me sing, Mamitz ? " he asked

her tenderly, gazing down into her small vivid eyes and seeing there the flame that was running through her body.

"Hah," she teased.

"Whey you hear me sing ? "

"Dat was a long time ago. You didn' use to sing fo' de Railroad Millionaires ? "

"Oh, you mean de chantrelle tents at Carnival time! *Sans humanité*," he crooned in a low vibrant voice.

"Hah, an' you wasn' de Lord Executor ? "

"Buh gerl, you got a good memory."

"I use to go an' hear you regular dat year, buh you was so much in love wit' Et'el, I never even try to get you. An' to besides, I ain' want no oder woman man. Buh boy, what a voice you did have! All de gerls was in love wit' you, Maxie." And then she had asked in an undertone, "Wha's matter between you an' Et'el ? "

"We bus' up. I finish wit' her."

"Bitch! " Mamitz murmured. "She had you long enough an' you was wastin' you time. Wha' you goin' do now ? "

Maxie did not reply immediately. He hummed the crazy tune of the fox-trot to which they were dancing, his gaze fixed on the black, sweating musicians. One, two, three, their steps went; one, two, three, slow and sensuous and silent. At last he said :

"Gerl, fo' true I ain' know wha' I goin' do. I 'fraid women now."

Mamitz asked in a mincing voice, "You 'fraid me too, Maxie doo-doo ? "

"I ain' know you, Mamitz. Dis is de firs' night we talk."

"Buh boy, we been seein' each oder now a long time."

"Seein' ain' knowin'," Maxie said after a reflective pause. "An' to besides, I ain' so sure a man does know a woman no matter how long dey been friendin'."

Mamitz made a grimace to say, "You, yes; dat's why you stay so long wit' dat bitch." Once more assuming her mincing manner, she said, "Doo-doo, you wants to be me sweetman?"

But Maxie was silent, as he moved through the maze of dancers slowly and sensuously. His experience with Ethelrida and others had taught him a lesson: that it was unwise to let a woman see that you wanted her at all. He kept silent and aloof with difficulty, for subtly Mamitz had aroused in him desire for her. He was wondering, in spite of the slightly crapulent condition of his head, if Mamitz meant by "sweetman" what Ethelrida had meant by the same word. Sweetman, for him, was a man kept entirely by a woman. Such a man never did any work, and the truth is that Maxie, though now twenty-four, had never done a stitch of work in his life. So far, because of his fine voice, attractive person and facility for dancing, women had kept him; had worked for him, had clothed him and given him everything else he wanted. Whenever he had spare money, he gambled; chiefly at *whé-whé*, a lottery which the Chinese had introduced into the island. The only condition tacitly exacted by the woman from the man in the bargain of his becoming her sweetman was that he should be faithful to her. On the other hand, in times of want, it was understood that she could take other men; and the money earned in such traffic was invariably handed over to the man. Maxie had always, because of his dislike for work, tried his best to observe his part of the bargain; consequently he had never found himself having to look for a job. And it wasn't his fault,

really, that he had grown accustomed to the rôle of sweetman. His very first experience, when he was a boy of seventeen, had turned him against work : the young woman would not hear of it and lavished upon him all that she made from washing, weaving alpargata tops, and taking other men. Furthermore, he had grown to realize his value to the Ethelridas and Mamitzes of Port of Spain; they threw themselves at him, let him know that they were jealous of his relations with any one woman, made unmistakable overtures to him; and so, grown wise and wily, he had perceived that he could pick and choose—and did so in the consummate fashion of a man of the world.

“ Buh doo-doo,” Mamitz had repeated, shifting her arm from his waist to around his neck and pressing her fingers down between the collar and skin, “ you ain’ wan’ to be me sweetman ? ”

“ How I know you serious, Mamitz ? ” Maxie asked, evasively.

“ Buh boy, you know I like you, an’ I can do fo’ you better can dat bitch. I make a lot a money.”

“ Look do suit I wearin’ : you carn’ do better dan dat. An’ Et’el use to give me money to spree an’ to play whé-whé. An’ sometimes. . . .”

“ Everyt’ing you want, I give you, doo-doo; so help me Gord. Look de dress I wearin’ : t’ree dollars a yard an’ I got plenty mo’ in de house. I give you two suits like de one you got on as soon as you say O. K. Buh boy, understan’, you come to me wit’ not’ing dat bitch give you.” She tossed her head to add, “ Doo-doo, we carn’ talk like dis. Le’s have a drink.”

Threading their way through the swarm of dancers shuffling round and round, they arrived at the bar. Mamitz ordered two rums. They drank.



"Say you like me," she pleaded, when they were seated in a quiet corner.

"I like you," Maxie said. "Youse a wonderful gerl."

"O.K. ?"

"Sure t'ing," he said, and she threw her arms round his neck and kissed him savagely on the lips.

That had been more than a year ago, and Maxie had had no cause for regret, except one : he had discovered, after a few months of living with her, that Mamitz had a violent temper. He could look at no woman, much less dance with any, without her threatening loudly and scandalously to beat him and even to cut him. Once she had thrown a knife at him and only his duck had saved a gash. He was afraid of her, especially when he was sober; so that, whenever out with her, he would take a little more than was good for him to give him courage. On such occasions, Mamitz hated to see him drinking and followed him wherever he went; but once past a certain stage, no Mamitz in Trinidad could hold him back. He never got drunk in the sense of losing control over his body and mind. Drink rather exhilarated him and transformed his natural docility into a desire for taking command.

The Creole Café was gaily decorated in the rum-shop fashion with strings of paper-flags, candle lanterns and multicoloured streamers. Black girls, brown girls, light-skinned mulatto girls, dressed in bright and satiny colours, laughing raucously and chattering like black-birds in the early morning, shuffled with their partners in slow sensuous movements round and round the room. The musicians blew and banged and crooned and pulled their bows, and the perspiration rolled down their faces.

Cats was there and Shorty and Uncle and Len, all sweetmen and Maxie's boon companions. As they wiggled by with their women, they greeted each other loudly.

"Kay-i! "

"Havin' a good time ? "

"Look Len," Maxie said to Mamitz. "Ain' he wearin' a happy brown suit ? "

"An' look Shorty," Mamitz said. "All de boys here to-night. How, how, Shorty ? "

"Fine an' dandy," Shorty said. He was a black squat young man with a scar running from the left eye to the mouth : evidence of one of his amatory battles. He was flashily dressed. Mamitz had always regarded him as her favourite boy-friend.

"Maxie," Mamitz said, as she swung past the musicians, "have a good an' happy time, buh boy, no drinkin', understand ? "

"A fellah mus' have a drink or two to put spunks in him."

"No high talkin' wit' me. You ain' know one drink from a dozen. An' spunks fo' you is hell fo' me."

"O.K., O.K.," Maxie said wearily.

"Whey you mean ? "

"I ain' got two tongue. An' fo' Gord's sake, chil', we here to enjoy ourself. Don' start rowin' an' I ain' do not'ing yet."

The drummer banged and the music ceased. Quickly the dancers coalesced into little gossiping groups.

"Hah, boy, happy times fo' black people to-night."

"Everybody here to-night."

"Look Mamitz wit' she sweetman goin' dere."

"Maxie goin' fo' a drink, I bet."

"Bottle an' him is bes' frien'."

"I hear she givin' him hell."

"Nobody jealous like Mamitz. I wouldn' be she sweetman fo' all de whé-whé banker dough."

"I hear she does lick him."

"Dat's how nigger does show love."

"Chut, chut! An' white people too."

"Yaas, yaas."

"Kyah, kyah, kyah! "

Meanwhile, Mamitz, Uncle, Shorty and Maxie were at the bar drinking old rum. Mamitz was dressed in a flagrantly red frock reaching down to her ankles. Her hair was banded with red satin, and generously applied powder had weakly attempted to subdue the blackness of her face, arms and neck. When she smiled, two rows of startlingly white teeth were revealed and her eyes narrowed and danced to the movement of her full everted lips. Every action had an indefinable animal grace.

"Shorty, youse me frien'," Mamitz said, glancing at the glass Maxie was just then putting to his lips.

"Oh, black gerl, wha's a little drink once in a blue moon fo' de man you say you love."

"Tell she dat fo' me," Maxie said.

"Maxie, no mo'," Mamitz said, frowning.

"Music, boys," Uncle said, his tall emaciated frame moving toward Mamitz. His hair, plastered down, glistened with vaseline, and he wore side-whiskers. Uncle thought himself handsome and strutted round with obvious conceit. He was in the habit of saying :

"Boys, you ken get any woman you want. I ken. All you mus' have is personality, an'," he would add, tapping his head with a finger, "somet'in' in de upper story." He was, perhaps, the fairest man in the hall. He interlocked with Mamitz; and Mamitz, giving Maxie one last warning look, shook her waist and stepped off rhythmically on to the polished floor with her partner.

Maxie was left at the bar with Shorty.

"An' howse t'ings ? " Shorty asked.

"Firs' rate. Here, black boy, two rums," he called out to the barman.

"You pacin' dem double-quick time," Shorty remarked, licking his lips with his tongue.

"She outa sight."

"Everybody laughin' at you how you 'fraid you woman."

"Who say I 'fraid ? "

"Everybody say so. Everybody got eyes."

"'Fraid hell, 'fraid hell."

"Look, man, an' remember is I whey say so: never show a woman you 'fraid her. Here, nigger, two rums, an' shake dem hot like Sheba."

At that moment Mamitz was lilting past the open door giving on to the bar-room and saw Maxie reaching over the counter for his glass of rum; whereupon she abruptly withdrew from Uncle, ran towards Maxie who had his back to her, snatched the glass from his hand and dashed the contents on to the floor.

"Whey de hell! " Maxie said, blinking and looking sheepish.

"An' we was jes' praisin' you sky-high," Shorty said.

"Shorty, youse me frien'," was all Mamitz said, her nostrils wide and quivering with anger, her eyes almost somnolent. Turning, she went back to her dance.

"You ain' treatin' you man right," Uncle said, making a fancy step.

"You got you own troubles, Uncle. Don' min' mine. Every sausage know ef it mek outa cow or cat insides."

Shorty was laughing. "Kyah, kyah, kyah! "

"Whey you laughin' at ? " Maxie asked truculently.

"An' you was jes' sayin' how you ain' 'fraid her. Kyah, kyah, kyah! "

"I want a drink."

"Dat's it, boy. Show you independence. Nigger, two rums."

Maxie hurried to the door, glanced round and returned.

"Whey you went to see? "

Maxie gave Shorty a contemptuous look to say, "If de moon comin' up yet."

"De moon? Kyah, kyah, kyah! "

"Fo' Chris' sake, shut you darn mout'! "

Ethelrida, leaning on her man's arm, came up the steps and was walking past Maxie when she saw him.

"How, Maxie? " she asked and paused.

Maxie glanced at her, grinned and then fixed his gaze on the door.

"You givin' me a dance, fo' ol' time sake? " she asked.

"When de moon go down," Shorty put in, laughing again.

Ethelrida went off with her man, laughing the laugh Maxie knew so well. He was left dazed; two shocks, and one on top of the other.

"Here, black boy," he called to the barman, "two rums."

Maxie was thinking of Ethelrida. Since that night, over a year ago, he had not seen her. She had put on some flesh and was more attractive than ever. He felt his old desire for her creeping back into him. What would he not give to have a dance with her to-night, to hold her once more to him, to look down into her face and see there the familiar light of her passion, to whisper into her ear the words that he had so often whispered in the days gone by. But Mamitz came to mind and broke up the vision with a crash. Actually,

it was the drummer banging the final note of the dance.

Mamitz came in alone and had a drink with Shorty.

"Dancin' dis one wit' me ? " Shorty said.

"Nex' one," Mamitz said. "I havin' dis one wit' Maxie."

"Sure t'ing," Maxie said. "Buh gerl, empty bag carn' stan' up, so wha' about a drink fo' me, euh ? Den, I give you mo' fancy steps dan ten Uncle."

"De little star talkin' to de big moon," Shorty put in. "Kyah, kyah, kyah ! " He rocked with bursts of laughter, his glaring scar turning and twisting with the contortions of his face.

"I been lookin' high an' low fo' you all," Gertrude said as she came up to the little party. She smacked Shorty playfully on the face.

"You ain' have to look fo' Shorty at a dance," Mamitz said. "Whey de bar is, he is."

"Good fo' you," Shorty said, and broke into laughter.

"Kyah, kyah, kyah ! " Mamitz mimicked him, cracking on the last note. "He does laugh in his sleep, Gertrude ? " she asked after a pause.

"Never min' Shorty, gerl. He's de bes' sweetman I ever have and de bes' in Port a Spain, enh doo-doo ? " She edged up to Shorty and rested her head affectionately on his shoulder.

"Sure t'ing, sure t'ing," Shorty said proudly, his simple heart expanding to the compliment of his woman.

By this time the crowd was pressing in on them at the bar, so Mamitz suggested a move and they went off. Ethelrida sailed across the dance-hall with her sweetman. Mamitz caught a glimpse of her. Her face hardened and took on an unlovely expression.



Giving Maxie a sidelong glance, she knew that he had already seen Ethelrida. An arrow of jealousy shot through Mamitz. She said, viciously,

"Maxie, dat bitch here. You seen she?"

But Maxie tried to be on his guard. "Who?" he asked nonchalantly.

"Dat bitch, you know well. Don' get me darm rouse here, man."

"Who?" Maxie persisted, beginning to be intimidated by Mamitz's complete and sudden change of mood. He had experienced her anger so often before, he knew exactly what it might lead to. He was thinking: "Wha' a pity she come so quick! Anoder two drinks an' I would a been ready fo' her now. Sure t'ing. Lordy, lordy!"

"Ef I see you talk to she, ef I see you look at she, I smash you up, you hear, smash you face upside down," Mamitz said, venomously.

Shorty caught Maxie's eye and winked the sign that he should keep quiet.

"Ise all fo' peace in dis vale a tears," he added, casting his eyes up to the ceiling in mock humility.

"Yes, doo-doo," Gertrude said. "An' you knows you get all de peace you wants wit' me."

Mamitz gave them a contemptuous glance and tossed her head to say: "No fool's paradise fo' dis chil'. When I got a sweetman, he don' fool me as I see oder sweetman fool dey woman."

But Gertrude and Shorty looked at each other, winked and then embraced and kissed before the irate Mamitz.

They went into the gallery overhanging the street. Mamitz felt that her evening had been ruined. She had often confessed it to herself: she was not so desperately in love with Maxie as she sometimes thought herself to be. It was not in her, really, to be desperately in love with any man. All her former

sweetmen she had lived with for short periods. With Maxie, however, she had already lived for more than a year : six months too long, according to the terms she had been accustomed to; and the reason for this, though she didn't know it, was a very simple one : Maxie, because of his charm, was constantly being given opportunities for infidelity. In consequence, Mamitz was all the time on tenterhooks of uncertainty and her desire for him was kept alive. Other women, she knew, wanted him: therefore, she continued to want him. And, were the truth known to Mamitz, she had every cause for jealousy and vigilance, for Maxie was not the kind to see women wanting him without responding—as long as he was safe from the watchful eye of Mamitz.

Outside in the street, a large crowd stood gaping up at the brightly lighted dance-hall.

Maxie sat between Gertrude and Mamitz. Mamitz leant over to Gertrude and said :

“Gerl, ef you go to a dance an’ see you sweetman one-time gerl shakin’ sheself befo’ you eyeballs, wha’ you do ? ”

Gertrude shrugged her shoulders in a giggle. “Chil’,” she said at last, “wha’ me sweetman have once ’pon a time an’ finish wit’, don’ worry dis mama. Like dat, me chil’; you jealous of he mooma, because he come out a she.”

“Kyah, kyah, kyah! ”

It was past midnight before Maxie had had the number of drinks necessary to give him “spunks.” By that time, nearly everybody in the hall was “sweet.” Even the musicians had had enough to encourage them to work their instruments as a cabby works his old mare. Mamitz brooded, heavy with jealousy and anger. The mere sight of Ethelrida roused in her a desire to rush at her and rip her to pieces. If she was not with Maxie, then she dodged about the

building, watching him from corners and awaiting her opportunity for doing what her passion was imperiously commanding her to do. Dancing, she contrived by gentle pressure on her partner's shoulder to follow in the wake of Maxie moving gracefully about the hall.

And Ethelrida, knowing by hearsay of Mamitz's jealous nature, put herself out of her way to tease Mamitz. She too danced near to Maxie. She kept looking at him, admiringly. She smiled when she caught his eyes. Once she remarked to her partner, as Mamitz swung past her with Maxie,

"Ain' Maxie, me ol' time sweetman, a dandy an' happy dancer?"

Mamitz glared at her.

And Maxie, growing bolder and bolder with drink, smiled at Ethelrida, made "sweet eyes" to her; and at last, overcome with drink and desire, he decided that he must dance with Ethelrida before the night was out.

Len, at the bar with Gertrude, hailed Maxie. Maxie strolled over with Cats and Uncle.

"You woman look all vex and mess up," Gertrude remarked to Maxie.

"She jealous fo' not'ing," Maxie said, gulping down his shot of old rum. "I go give her somet'ing to jealous for. A man is a man, dat's wha' I say," and he slapped his chest.

"You ain' name man do dat," Shorty said, joining them.

Maxie flared up. "I ain' name man? I ain' name man? How much you bet?"

"I ain' bettin'," Shorty said.

"Youse a darm coward," Len put in, his kinky hair standing up at least three inches from his narrow

black forehead. "You challenge de man, take a bet."

"Len right," Cats said.

"Len right," Gertrude said. "Mamitz too-too bossy."

"Sure t'ing, too bossy."

"Sure t'ing," Cats agreed.

Shorty put his hand into his pocket and extracted a two-dollar note. "I ain' stingy," he said. "I ain' dat sort. I spen' me money here, dere, everywhere. Look Gertrude, axe her. Only, Mamitz is me good frien' an' I ain' want to see trouble in dis dance-hall to-night. Buh boy, to show you ain' stingy, look two dollars. Hol' de stakes, Cats."

"No, not Cats," Len said, taking the notes from Shorty and Maxie. "He go spen' de money."

"Youse a darm liar," Cats said, bristling up. "Don' say dat again."

Gertrude interposed. "No rowin', fo' Christ sake. Dat's de worse of all you men when you in liquor : fight an' high words. Shut you mout', Len."

Len mumbled : "I ain' no liar. He got no darm right to call me liar."

"You call me t'ief firs'," Cats said.

"O.K., O.K.," Gertrude said, to pacify them. "Tit fo' tat, butter fo' fat, I steal you dorg, you steal me 'cat."

Shorty did not laugh, for he spied Ethelrida approaching the party.

"Whey all you rowin' over ?" Ethelrida asked ingenuously.

They all looked at her.

"We ain' rowin'," Shorty said.

"Dey wan' to beat you, Maxie doo-doo ?" Ethelrida asked, disregarding Shorty's statement.

Maxie did not reply. His heart began to beat very fast.

Gertrude whispered into Shorty's ear, "Look Mamitz peepin' roun' de door."

Shorty left the party and went over to Mamitz. He saw her walking across the hall and followed her into the gallery.

"We got a little bet," Len said.

"Bet? I so important as all dat?"

Gertrude glanced at the boys one after the other.

"You look fine an' dandy to-night, Et'el," Maxie said.

"Ol' fire-stick ketch quick," Cats said. Ethelrida smiled.

"You ain' dancin' wit' me, Maxie, fo' ol' time sake?"

The boys looked at each other and then at Gertrude.

"Sure t'ing," Maxie said, "an' a special dance too. I goin' over to axe de musicians to play a special fo' me an' you. Wha' you want, ol' gerl?"

Ethelrida reflected. "Le' dem play *Woman sweeter dan Man*," she said.

"Sure t'ing," Maxie said, and went off.

"Et'el, you goin' mek trouble to-night," Shorty said, rejoining the party.

"Dat ain' de way to win you bet," Cats said.

"Ef I win, I give Maxie back his money. Mamitz is me good frien'. She in a hell of a temper."

"Temper? Wit' me?" Ethelrida laughed ominously.

Maxie returned. "O.K., Et'el. Nex' one, *Woman sweeter dan Man*. Let's have a drink fo' ol' time sake, gerl."

"Sure t'ing."

A moment later, the musicians struck up. Mamitz, from one of the gallery doors, saw Maxie escort Ethelrida into the dance-hall, and saw them step off to the rich lascivious strains of the music. She stood

watching them as they swayed and swung, until Ethelrida caught her eye and smiled malignantly.

Everybody seemed to know that something was about to happen; there were few pairs dancing.

Mamitz screamed and rushed across the floor to Maxie. Gripping him by the shoulder with her strong hands, she jerked him away from Ethelrida. The music ceased. One or two people screamed, and the dancers scattered to the doors. Ethelrida slinked off, leaving the floor entirely to Maxie and Mamitz.

Mamitz flashed a knife. Maxie stood and swayed, dumbfounded.

"I ain' go cut you, be Chris', I ain' go cut you," Mamitz said in a frenzied voice, "buh wha' is mine is mine, an' I do wit' it as I darm well want."

With one slash of the knife, she ripped his jacket off him. Maxie jumped back, irresolute. Mamitz pounced upon him again, cut his shirt from off him, then his trousers, and he stood naked in the middle of the room, glancing about like a whipped puppy.

Mamitz, picking up the shreds of his clothes into a bundle, dashed it into his face and stalked out of the hall, down the steps, into the street.



JACQUES LeCLERCQ

CAVATINA

*You had strayed far,  
You were gone long,  
I thought of a star,  
I fashioned a song :*

*A song to encrust  
In the crown of the sky,  
To silver the dust  
Where spent winds die;*

*To quicken the hush  
Of a lost summer hour  
With the thrill of a thrush,  
The scent of a flower;*

*To surge like a flame  
Through my waking and rest  
With the cry of your name  
And the warmth of your breast.*

JACQUES LECLERCQ

GOD

*We humans have befriended you; we first  
Invented you to charm our idleness,  
You satisfied a primitive crude thirst  
For mystery : your rôle was to express  
What we by work created. Then your use  
Grew practical and harsh : we brought you in  
As sponsor for our cruelty, excuse  
For our injustice, alibi for sin.  
We have befriended you because you serve  
The purpose of our frailty; out of stone  
We have built monuments that twist and curve  
Skyward like incense smoke for you alone.  
O crowning irony ! with fervid breath  
We have transmogrified you beyond death !*

## T. O. BEACHCROFT

### THE EYES

At the hospital it had been a long day, one of a succession of long exhausting days. As Dr. Sylvester went down the passage to the street door, his rapid walk verged on running, like that of a man escaping. He saw the green paint of the walls was moist with the rime of the November evening. Fog was drifting into the passage and the electric light bulbs each had a nimbus. The cement floor resounded dully to his steps.

It was a double swinging door that opened on to the street, painted green, with a brown, worn streak on each side, where impatient feet had pushed it open. Drawing on his gloves as he went, Dr. Sylvester jerked his shoulder against this door, and just as he did so he heard a voice behind him.

“Doctor ! Doctor Sylvester ! ”

“Oh, damn ! ” he muttered. “What now ? What now ? ”

A second later he would have been through the door and away. For a moment he hesitated. Already the nurse who had called was in sight up the passage.

“I’m so sorry, Doctor,” she said. “Sister asked me to find you before you went.”

“Well ? ”

“Dr. Sterndale isn’t here yet; there’s a case come in; in the receiving-room now—it’s a —— ”

Dr. Sylvester turned and ran past her up the passage. As he pushed by, making her step back against the wall, she saw his face was white, almost grey, and very tired. His black, keen eyes were sunken, and the skin was discoloured below them. His lips were pale, nearly as pale as his face.

"Still," she thought, "it's no use being a doctor, or a nurse, if you expect to have your life to yourself." And Dr. Sylvester was lucky to have a home and a wife and baby; his life wasn't *all* hospital. And again, if a doctor likes to do a hospital job as well as a practice, of course he gets used up; it's his own choice. She was forgetting, or perhaps had never known, that Dr. Sylvester's work at the hospital was unpaid.

Sylvester burst into the receiving-room and closed the door sharply.

"Well?" he said.

The Sister was there: with her, sitting on the bench that ran down one side of the bare, boarded room, was a young woman; an old-looking young woman sallow and dingily dressed. And lying limply in this woman's arms was a little girl of four or five. The child's head hung back across the crook of the woman's arm; rather too far back. The face was flushed. Her breathing was heavy and deep. She was in a feverish stupor or perhaps quite unconscious.

For a second there was silence.

Sylvester turning his back on the two women, flung off his coat and gloves and threw them on the table.

"Well?" he said again, as he did so.

"This little girl was brought in about quarter of an hour ago ——" said the Sister, not quite sure if she had his attention. "Dr. Sterndale seems to have been delayed, and the case ——"

"How did it begin?" said Sylvester, interrupting her and turning to the woman swiftly.

The woman glanced up at the Sister, as if wondering if she was to speak.

"Yesterday," she said, and hesitated.

Sylvester paced to and fro.

"Go on," he said.

"Yesterday morning, when she woke up, she seemed a bit queer and heavy; and as soon as my husband looked at her, he said 'Oh, look at her eyes! Whatever has the child done to her eyes?' I thought she must have caught a bad cold in her eyes——"

Again the woman paused. She found it hard to talk to this pale, abrupt doctor, who spoke in nervous jerks, or said nothing, and seemed hardly to be listening.

The brilliant electric light beat on the three of them, making their faces dead white and casting hard-edged shadows about them. The white, starched apron and tall figure of the Sister stood out vivid and luminous against the dark clothes of the woman.

She, with an effort, went on speaking.

"Then she seemed very heavy all yesterday and she had a bad headache. She just seemed to be asleep all the time, but was quite quiet—I didn't like her being so quiet. I gave her a little soup, but she didn't seem to care for it, though she took it."

As the woman was talking, Sylvester put a thermometer under the child's arm. Then he began to take her pulse. He found the hand was very hot and dry, and the pulse slow, yet strongly marked and irregular. He turned up one of the child's eyelids and gazed for a moment at the eye; the ball was discoloured and filled with blood. He let the lid go, and as the dark lashes fell again on the cheek, the child made no movement.

"Go on," he said, "don't stop."

"When my husband came in, 'I don't like her looks,' he said. 'We ought to have the doctor, if

she don't look better in the morning.' So I told him, 'Let's see how she sleeps.' I only hope I was right to leave it."

Sylvester took the thermometer from the child's armpit. The woman sat very still, not moving the child on her lap. Her arms must have been aching. She saw him hand the thermometer to the Sister with scarcely a glance at it. He did not need to read it. He knew now that the temperature would be a hundred and two or over.

"Well?" he said once more, and his voice was as stern and impatient as ever.

"She slept quite quiet. She slept so well I thought it must be all right. But she was no better nor worse this morning. Just lay quite listless—then this evening she got so that I couldn't rouse her at all. I couldn't do nothing till my husband was back, and then I brought her straight round here."

"Did your husband come?"

"No," she said. "I have two others—she's the eldest." Sylvester nodded. He turned to the Sister and spoke quickly in a low voice, at the same time grabbing his coat from the table and beginning to put it on.

"Yes, doctor," the woman heard the sister answer, "of course; the small annex of Ward B is empty. I'll see to it at once ——"

"No—I'll see to that," he said, "you see to the child—then I must really go ——"

He was at the door as he finished speaking. He pulled it open, then darted back into the room, as the woman stood up with her child.

"Good-bye," he said, "good-bye." He nodded quickly and was gone without waiting for her to reply.

Five minutes later he was again in the passage hurrying towards the door that led to the outside



world. Once that door had swung to behind him, he would be shut off from the strain and overwork of the last few weeks. It had gone too far now. He must rest.

But, as he walked, his step slackened. Involuntarily he paused before the door. He bit the fingers of the gloves he carried, pulling them with little jerks against his teeth. Nonsense. He had done all that was necessary. Sterndale was already in the hospital, he could hear his hearty voice echoing from the stone-floored corridors behind him. It would be absurd to go back now to give him personal details of this one case. And he was too tired for Sterndale. Besides, it wasn't the child he was thinking of; she was going to die. She had meningitis : the fulminant type that killed quickly. Already her blood-stained eyes had reflected their last image of her mother—the last sight of this world she would see. There was nothing more to be done.

For a moment he stood biting his glove, then he pushed the door open and stepped out, in the direction of his home.

But after a few steps he turned and walked back again, treading gently as if he were breaking some private rule. He passed outside the swing doors and reached the hospital's main entrance. Here he carefully filled and lit a pipe, and took his stand in the shadow, watching the tobacco glow. From time to time a short sigh escaped him.

He had to wait ten minutes. Then he saw the woman come out.

"Perhaps I'm going your way," he said to her.  
"Let me take you to the corner."

The woman walked at his side in silence.

"Did the Sister tell you?" he said.

"Yes, Sir," she answered.

Again they were silent.

"She is not your only child, you said?"

"No, Sir—I have two others."

"But she was your first."

"Yes, Sir."

"Are the others perfectly well?"

"Perfectly, thank you Sir—*now*. But then so was she. Supposing one of them was to wake up with those eyes to-morrow. What am I to do? How can I be safe?"

She spoke rapidly, but very calmly.

"Can any one be safe?"

He asked the question in sympathy, yet it sounded almost like a rebuke. Neither spoke again till the end of the street.

"I must go here," said Sylvester. "Good-bye."

He watched her pass two or three street-lamps and she was lost in the misty darkness. She never looked back.

He walked on home at a fierce pace. He wished he had said more to her. But why dwell on it? His duty was to rest his nerves and keep his judgment clear. Why pick out this one case from a week of too much strain. It was his knowledge the hospital needed, not misplaced sensibility and exacerbated nerves.

The woman was beyond sympathy, too. For the moment, the calamity, like a terrible wound when inflicted, gave her no anguish.

Sylvester strode on down the long avenue of street-lamps. They glowed two or three in front of him with their wreaths of mist, each one casting around an exhalation of doubtful light—a wheel of yellow rimmed with blue that revolved as he approached. He turned from the lights; and vivid pictures of the day were painted on the darkness before his open eyes. He saw the woman as she had

sat with the child motionless in her arms, and the bright light of the receiving-room beating down on the child's feverish face. He saw its eye, now rose-hued, now filled with flames and rubies; now immeasurably extended and far away, like a red western sky in which veins and arteries hung in mid-air.

Then he stopped in his walk, and, turning, went quickly back to the hospital and shouldered through the swing doors.

"Sylvester," said Sterndale some time later, in his deep commanding voice, "I'm surprised to see you still here. Get home. Did you have a proper sleep last night?"

"Oh, an hour or two. I'm all right, just a bit tired."

"My dear fellow, your face is grey—your eyes look a mile away; and you're walking about like a man in a dream. Do get home and to bed."

"I'm going to stay to-night. There's something I want to see."

"There's not the slightest need. I shall be here myself till midnight. What is it?"

"A meningitis case, in B annex."

"What, that child who came in this evening? There's nothing to do. I can give you full details. She's bound to die."

Sylvester looked hard at the floor, as if talking to it. "I know," he said, with a sudden jerk. "That's why I am going to stay."

"I don't understand."

"I want to watch the eyes just at the moment of death."

Sterndale shook his head.

"Listen," he said, "you can do that some other time. You'll drop in your tracks."

"I never drop in my tracks."

"Why do you want to?"

"Obviously," said Sylvester, without raising his eyes, "because it's a particularly good opportunity. She will be unconscious from now till the time she dies: it will happen before the morning, and I can rest afterwards. Have you ever seen what I mean?"

"Can't say I have."

"Well, I have, but only once. And I want to see it again."

"You ought to think of the infection. You'll be bending over that child's face for hours, Sylvester. The breath from the nostrils is so dangerous. I wish you'd listen to me, Sylvester. . . . Besides, you owe something to your wife and your own child: it's not safe; especially in the state you're in."

Sylvester gave a short, high-pitched laugh. "I'm sorry not to take your advice." Then with galvanic swiftness he raced up the stairs three at a time. Sterndale heard his voice echoing when he was out of sight on the floor above.

"Bring me an ophthalmoscope in the B annex."

Alone in the room with the dying little girl, Sylvester paced back and forth. Except for a bright light at the head of the bed, the room was in the dark. As he paced, he passed now into the light, now into the darkness again. Each time he turned, his shadow blotted out, then revealed again, the small motionless body propped on its pillows.

The doctor's step was light and firm. He no longer felt tired. He congratulated himself on having stayed and on his mounting exhilaration. He paused

and listened to the breathing just faintly audible in the stillness. A hesitation, the slightest flutter, and he was at the bedside, his face against the child's. For whole minutes, he remained rigidly still, staring into the eye, feeling the faint blow of breath against his forehead. It was now three in the morning, and he had lost all sense of time. The little girl seemed dead and yet not dead. Occasionally he paused and stared fixedly at her face from a distance.

There were three empty beds. He rested on the bed farthest from the child, lost as it were in the shadowed distances of the room. He picked up a book and, holding it awkwardly so that some dim light fell on it, peered at the print. He turned one page, then put the book down.

Perhaps the child would not die till the morning. Already he had been waiting longer than he had expected. Sterndale had warned him of infection. He remembered his own words to the woman, "Can any one be safe?" One morning he might see his own child wake and look round with the same blood-filled eyes. That is what the woman had seen first. "Look at the child's eyes," her husband had said to her, "Whatever has the child been doing to her eyes?"

The breathing grew more tremulous. Instantly Sylvester's shadow leaped across the room and he was crouching over the bed. The eye was flooded with a bright light from the mirror of the ophthalmoscope. Already the pupil had been paralysed by atropine. He was looking into the depths of a motionless rose-red pool. The beam of light clarified the translucent outer teguments of the eye. It shone past the cornea, and the aqueous humour, through the lens and soft vitreous body with its hyaloid membrane, and gently irradiated the crimson floor of the pool itself—the delicate retina.

The deep background of red was now Sylvester's whole field of vision. As he gazed, the glowing pool changed into a vault of dark roseate midnight, stretching unfathomable leagues above his head, while he, its sole beholder, was frozen in a timeless watching. Far off, at one side, there glimmered a pale nebula of wax-like yellow, marking the point where the optic nerve led away to the brain behind. From here diverged the delicate and immense wanderings of the veins and arteries across his firmament, the veins deeper in colour and the measureless arteries gleaming like rubies. In those veins and arteries blood was steadily flowing, but would flow for only a second more.

For just then some purulent suffusion paralysed the brain, the blood paused in its steady passage, and the scene changed. A minute colourless point, a hiatus in the blood stream, appeared in each channel, and moved in slow, hesitant pulsations across the vault; then another. The flow changed to single beads, the last weak pulses of the heart. One final drop paused, jerked, stopped. And the rose colour at once began to fade—faster it grew paler, till the whole vision was drained of colour.

Sylvester stood back from his instrument, overcome by a gush of tenderness. It was a strange way to die. No tears, no love ; just nameless material for medical observation.

He rang the bell for the nurses and then walked quickly out of the hospital.

In the street it was intensely cold. The street-lamps were still lit, but not a soul was about. Sylvester felt too tired almost to walk, but there was no hope of finding a taxi. And as he walked, a horde of confused terrors attacked him. He should have followed Sterndale's advice. Sterndale was always



right. He had shut himself up for hours with the little girl. Wantonly he had exposed his own child to the danger of infection.

The thought persisted and magnified. Like a dwarfed figure amid the gigantic perils of life, Sylvester walked on through a dark colonnade of colossally shadowed houses. His own house was silent. He groped his way in, not turning on the lights. His wife and the baby were both sleeping so soundly that they neither turned nor sighed when he came in. Quickly he flung down his clothes, forgetting even to wind his watch. Then in bed he lay trembling. Soon, a warm tide of sleep crept over him. His limbs were borne out like fronds of weed in a gentle stream. He sank through fathoms of deep green till he was lost in a total blackness. His body was carried restlessly this way and that on whispering currents, salt fingers fretting at him and dissolving his flesh, till his bones shivered green and naked in the depths.

It was shortly before dawn that he moaned in his sleep. He was lying on his back, one arm flung behind his head. His breathing became spasmodic and heavy. In vain he struggled with his nightmare. Lewd and ghastly faces pressed round and touched him with their wet mouths. Cold tendrils closed round and paralysed him. His soul wept with unbearable loathing and dread. He screamed, yet knew he made no sound. Like marble, his body stretched on the bed, and only deep sighs could break out of the stifled penetralia of his bosom. He opened his eyes, and for many minutes stared into the darkness, still unable to move. At last, through a great effort of will, he switched on the light.

There was a rustle of movement from his wife's bed.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"I must get up for a bit," he said. "I've had a terrible nightmare."

She turned to look at him. Then she cried out :

"Oh, your *eyes*! Whatever have you done to your eyes ? "

"What ? " said Sylvester, in almost a whisper.

"They're so terribly red and bloodshot."

"Give me a looking-glass."

He saw his eyes, fevered and deep red. The whole ball was suffused with blood.

Repressing his dread, he told her what it must mean. For a few moments, they sat silent, each avoiding the other's gaze.

Then, "Quick," he said, "ring up Sterndale's house. There is no time to lose. Ask him to help. He'll do something."

He watched her pick up the telephone by his bedside. She had mastered herself, but as she spoke into the instrument it seemed to him that his strength was leaving his body.

She turned to him. "He says he must speak to you."

Sterndale's strong, firm voice was in his ear.

"That you, Sylvester ? You should have followed my advice. Your nerves are running away with you. It's a bare thirty-six hours since you first saw that child—only three or four hours since you were in any real danger of infection."

"Yes," said Sylvester, dully.

"Well ? " came the voice.

"Good God ! " cried Sylvester. "Nine days' incubation. I must be going mad. It's absurd—how could I forget —— ? "

"You'll forget your own name if you aren't careful," said Sterndale. "Go back to bed and get about twelve hours' sleep. Good-bye, Sylvester."

*T. O. BEACHCROFT*

"It's all right," he said, feeling his heart beating wildly. "It's all right. Good God ! how could I forget ? I must be going mad."

"But your eyes ?" said his wife. "Your eyes ?"

"Nothing. Just some queer nervous reaction. It's what I've been seeing and thinking. And my being so overtired. It's strange the symptoms your mind can produce when you overdo things. Damned strange—rather frightening ——"

He flung himself on the bed and broke into sobbing and laughter.

## R. L. MÉGROZ

### SONNET

*Where is that starry treachery in your eyes  
Which lures man to the difficult path that goes  
Past the cliffed mountains into the deep rose  
Whose heavenly petals are portals of paradise ?  
Where is the truth more potent than the lies  
With which we quell this hunger the earth knows  
When season after season life upflows  
Through every form that in fulfilment dies ?*

*The while your heated body's clasped to mine  
We are no more than paramours of death  
Breathing upon each other charnel breath,  
Until from high within us joy descend  
To mingle in our earthly bread and wine  
A peace that is beyond love's natural end.*

## J. P. HOGAN

### THE PRIEST'S HOUSEKEEPER

Father Moriarty had just finished his midday meal. He lit his pipe and leaned back in his chair, an air of ease and self-satisfaction caressing his smooth, rounded cheeks. . . . But a little of this wore off—as though one had polished the bloom off a grape—when his housekeeper came in to clear away the dishes, and he began to pick his teeth with a faintly abstracted air.

“I’ll be taking forty winks if I can this afternoon, Kitty. I don’t want to be disturbed. I hardly slept at all last night.”

Quietly she folded up the tablecloth. He tried to shut out his awareness of the poise of her fine, firm breasts as she bent over the table, tried not to meet her great blue eyes or to glance at her lovely jet black hair. . . . But he heard her voice, rich and soft—

“Maybe ye were throubled about somethin’, Father?”

He ignored her remark.

“Now don’t forget. Don’t waken me unless it’s something urgent.”

After a few minutes’ smoke he got up, walked heavily over to the blazing fire, knocked out his pipe and relapsed into an easy chair. Drowsiness overcame him; slowly his eyes shut, opened, shut again. . . . Then the very thing he had dreaded actually

happened; he heard the front door bell ring, heard Kitty go to open it, followed by his sister's voice tinkling gently in the hall. What had prevented his sleeping during the night was now to deprive him of his afternoon nap. He became wide awake, damning and blasting repeatedly in a low, smothered voice.

"Hullo, Mary!" he said, rising with forced amiability after Kitty had shown her in and flounced out again with exaggerated *hauteur*. "How are ye to-day?"

Of course he didn't need to ask; Terence had told him all about her present troubles.

"I'm afraid I'm just a little bit upset to-day, Bernard," she began, sitting down on the opposite side of the fireplace. "It's that young wife of Michael's. She ——"

"Yes, what's she up to now?"

He stared into the fire as he spoke. His conscience pricked him terribly when he looked at her; she made him feel so guilty that he hated the very sight of her. Besides he could see her quite well without directing his eyes upon her; could see that painfully meek expression, the downcast, eternally reproachful yet half-pleading eyes, for all the world like a stricken animal. He knew too how yellow her complexion would be, with the unnatural bright flush just below the cheek bones. . . . Poor cowed wretch, how her pitableness caused her presence to get on his nerves! How she intruded upon his sleek comfort, reminded him against his will of the lean days when she had had to work herself to the bone, selling cigarettes and chocolates behind a counter, twelve hours a day, in order to help to keep Terence and him at college. He wanted to forget all that now, wanted just to be comfortable, and as she stood in the way of that static ambition he simply wanted her



to die. She had had illnesses enough, God knew ! He shot a furtive glance at her. Yes, it was all as he thought. . . .

"Well, what's she been up to ?" he repeated gruffly. As he spoke, his heart went as heavy as lead.

"It's not what she does, Bernard, or what she says even. It's a sort of undercurrent. She—she makes me feel I'm in the way, you see."

She broke off lamely.

"Och, rubbish ! You're always going about thinking people are snubbing you. You must get out of such a wicked way of thinking ! I'm sure the girl's only too pleased to have you. It's company for her during the day when Michael and the children are out."

For a moment Mary was silent. Then she said in her quiet monotone—

"No, Bernard, you always try to put me off. But I'm not going to be put off any longer. I'm going to find work if I have to go charring in office buildings. I can't go on being a nuisance to my relatives like this. It puts poor Michael in such an awkward position; he does his best to make me feel at home and as soon as his back's turned Stella does all she can to make me wretched. She hints that ——"

"What does Michael earn these days ?" put in the priest irrelevantly.

"I really couldn't tell you, Bernard. They never discuss things like that with me. I suppose he must get at least four pounds a week. He has a good job, you know; he ——"

"Four pounds a week ? Nonsense ! Rubbish ! Eight would be nearer. Really, Mary, you're a child in these matters. Why, everybody knows that a man in ——"

"Yes, but Bernard, I wasn't discussing what Michael earned. You brought that up. I was trying to tell you about Stella."

There was such a determined tone in the voice of the habitually meek and subservient Mary that for the moment her brother felt taken aback. A premonition gained hold of him.

"She is constantly hinting that I'm a drag on you," continued the thin but insistent voice, "and on Terence as well. She doesn't exactly snub me like Eileen used to do; she's more subtle than Eileen, more underhand, goes about things differently. After you had been over the other week she started talking about your shoes being down at the heel and about your hat being almost green ——"

"Hah! And did she now! Well, it's a damned good hat ——"

"Hush, Bernard! Don't swear, please! I'm only telling you what she said. . . . And after she'd been here that day in the summer she came back with such a tale to Michael in my presence about the curtains here being not too clean and the hearthrug being threadbare in the middle. She even said that Miss O'Brady ——"

"Yes, yes. And what does Michael say to all this?"

"Oh, he knows, I think, what she's getting at. He simply laughs at her and says: 'Get along with you! Bernard's all right, Bernard doesn't want for much!' You know that laughing, jovial way Michael has?"

"I know Michael's a damned fool!"

"Hush, Bernard. . . ."

"Well, he is a fool! What did he want to go and marry that she-devil for?"

By way of reply, Mary modestly stared at the threadbare hearthrug. Now that she had got her

grievances off her chest, she seemed to have relapsed into her customary timidity.

Her brother took out his pipe and slowly filled it.

"I suppose I could get some kind of work if I tried?" ventured Mary.

"Och, rubbish! There's no work to be had anywhere. The poverty in this parish is terrible. And two more mills are closing down at the end of this week. Work indeed!"

The flush on Mary's cheeks deepened. She seemed to be wanting to say something she hadn't the courage to utter.

"But if I can't find work," she stammered at last, "there's only one thing left that I can think of. . . . You see, it would be much cheaper for you, Bernard, if I came to live here. I'd be quite willing to keep house for you, more than willing, and ——"

"Oh, but my dear Mary, I have a housekeeper already. Can I turn Miss O'Brady out into the street?—she whom the late Canon Moore thought so much of (God rest his soul!) that he left her two hundred pounds in his will! Och, ye must think before ye speak! Hah! Always think before ye speak!"

He began to bluster about and his cheeks grew as red as the glowing fire.

"Have a nice cup of tea!" he exploded with an abortive attempt at tenderness. "See now, I'll go and ask Miss O'Brady to prepare ye a nice cup of tea!"

"No, it's all right, Bernard, I don't want any tea, thanks. But don't you think, even if I didn't house-keep for you, I might come and live here?"

"But—hah! Really, Mary ——"

He stuttered and gasped as though beside himself.

"It would be so much more economical for you

than paying for my keep at Stella's," she said meekly, still gazing at the threadbare hearthrug.

"Och, but there are other considerations ! For one thing, ye don't like Miss O'Brady. Ye'd be more miserable here than with Stella. Ye'd ——"

"When have I said I didn't like Miss O'Brady, Bernard ? You know very well it's she who doesn't like me !"

"Tut, tut ! There ye go again, imagining the whole woruld's against ye !" he bellowed. Then suddenly changing his note he hastened to add, "Anyhow, it'd be quite impracticable to have ye living here. In a priest's house there must be no domestic friction, no atmosphere of women's petty jealousies. Ye should know that, Mary. Ye know well enough a priest takes the vow of celibacy so that he may be able to serve God free from the distractions of domestic life, don't ye ? Well now, let me go and get ye a cup of tea, and as soon as I get the chance I'll go and see Terence and we'll put our heads together and see if we can't solve your difficulties somehow, with God's grace !"

Mary had gone and Kitty had come in to take away the tray of tea things. The priest was standing, staring into the fire, his right elbow resting on the mantelpiece, his forehead pressed against the palm of his hand.

He heard the rattle of crockery and could feel her eyes upon him, but he didn't look round. He supposed that she had divined the nature of Mary's errand and that she was now expecting him to say something. That galled him. Why should he be answerable to her ? Why indeed ! He fumed inside him, but it was more against himself than

against Kitty, against his own weakness rather than her presumption.

At the last moment he called her back.

"See here, Kitty!"

To protect himself he adopted a bullying tone, as he had done with Mary. ———

"Yes, Father?"

She turned and greeted him with a look of the sweetest innocence.

"As you know, Kitty," he went on in the same tone, "my sister's been here this afternoon and she tells me that she's very unhappy with her sister-in-law. Things have been going on for some time which, had I have known, I wouldn't have tolerated for a moment. Not for a moment! And so..."

He paused and looked at her almost threateningly.

"And so," he repeated with a slight thrusting-out of his rather pouchy jowl, "I have arranged that she shall come and live here at the presbytery almost at once. And you must understand that nothing must be said or done to make her in any way worried or uncomfortable. Never forget, Kitty, that this is a priest's house and it must not be disturbed by any domestic friction. I hope ye'll bear that in mind!"

His voice had risen almost to a shout. Perhaps he hoped to quell her that way.

"Och, Father, ye've no need to fear anny trouble bein' caused by me. Sure an' by the time your sister is under this roof I'll be far enough away. Does she come to-night?"

"Ye'll be told in good time when she's coming. And ye can cease this silly talk of leaving my service, for I shall refuse to listen to ye! Don't forget I'm your parish priest and I forbid ye to leave this house without my consent! Ye understand?"

"Ye wouldn't be so foolish as to forbid me,

Father ! ” replied the girl, still in the same calm voice, as she turned and went out of the room.

What did she mean by that, the hussy ! He gaped foolishly with open mouth in the direction of the closed door. Of course, it had been all lies about Mary’s coming; he had simply said it on the spur of the moment to see whether or not she would stand by her old threat to leave if ever Mary did come to live there. And now he felt sure that, if it had been indeed true that Mary was coming (and conscience at any rate made him wish to God she were), Kitty would be gone the next morning.

A violent rage suddenly possessed him. The colour left his cheeks; they became yellow and saggy. He paced up and down the threadbare heathrug like a caged lion.

The clock in the hall struck four. On a sudden impulse he stamped heavily out of the room, donned his hat and coat and slammed the front door behind him. His steps took him in the direction of the school; without remembering how he had got there he found himself rampaging into the big hall where the Reverend Sister Angelica was sitting quietly at her desk.

Then he began to rage at her about the poor attendances of the schoolchildren at the nine o’clock Mass on Sunday mornings; to rail against the number who turned up for High Mass at eleven. Wasn’t the nine o’clock Mass intended for the children ? Weren’t the whole of the rows in the front half of the church reserved for them at the nine o’clock Mass ? He demanded to know what punishment was meted out to those who missed Mass altogether; he remarked that it was a poor look-out if Catholic nuns and Catholic teachers couldn’t compel Catholic children with Catholic parents to attend Mass regularly on Sundays. . . . By



twenty-five minutes past four, at which time she swung the big bell to and fro for assembly for prayers, the unhappy nun's face was as white as the stiff, starched linen cape that adorned her shoulders.

Yellow with the bile of his rage, the furious priest announced to the assembled teachers and children that there was to be no more slackness in the fulfilment of their religious duties, that any boy or girl not attending nine o'clock Mass the next Sunday would be soundly spanked by him, Father Moriarty himself, on the Monday morning, and that if any of them couldn't get up in time for nine o'clock Mass they would be refused admission to the later one at eleven and would be treated to a spanking just as if they had missed altogether.

By this time he had lost all control of himself. Frothing at the mouth, he continued in his seething, ever-rising voice to bellow out that there would be no prayers in the school this afternoon, but that every boy and girl must, immediately after getting their hats and coats, line up in the yard and march in orderly fashion to the church for Benediction. No higgledy-piggledy straggling along, making themselves a laughing-stock in the eyes of every grinning Protestant in the street, but a proper orderly march ! And not only must they go this particular Wednesday afternoon but every Wednesday afternoon from to-day on.

"And I rely upon you, Sister," he shouted, so that every child in the school plainly heard, "to see that the teachers go too ! There must be no slacking, no excuses !"

The teachers looked uncomfortable; some of the younger ones flushed a little. But they felt more ashamed for the priest with the frothing saliva on his lips than of themselves.

Everything went wrong. Four boys escaped from the absurd procession which followed the half-crazy man. In the vestry two of the acolytes tremblingly confessed that their surplices were at home being washed; they hadn't expected to need them before Sunday. They got a sound cuffing across the head which made them privately resolve to wear their surplices in future till they were as black as their cassocks. Then the charcoal which gave off the incense wouldn't light. Finally, in his rage the holy man accidentally tore the lining of his handsome satin cope, a marvellously embroidered affair given to him by a rich parishioner.

When at last he stamped to the altar and Sister Imelda began to play the opening bars of the "O Salutaris," he suddenly turned and held up his hand.

"Wait!" he roared.

The notes of the organ faded away.

"Now let this be a lesson to all of ye! Four boys out of Standard Seven have deliberately run away from this holy Benediction. To-morrow morning I'll come down to that school and before the whole lot of ye I'll make electric sparks shoot out of the backsides of those four boys! It'll be the last time they or anybody else will run away! Let that be a lesson to ye!"

Then he turned to the altar and began playing fireworks with the Sacred Host in the golden monstrance in lusty anticipation of the holocaust of the morrow. Never had Sister Angelica heard or seen such behaviour in the holy church; she knelt with pursed lips and a look of genuine pain on her pale, drawn features. When she heard the tabernacle door being slammed with such force that it set all the altar candles quivering and flickering she lowered her head and privately murmured, "Jesus, Mary and Joseph, have mercy on us!"

Half an hour later Father Moriarty locked up the church and stumbled home wearily. His rage had left him; he felt ill, limp, half-dead. Back in his study, he helped himself liberally to whisky, drank it neat in big, throat-scorching gulps, then flopped heavily into his fireside chair. Gradually his trembling ceased, but the feeling of weakness prevailed.

He was beaten, of course. He might just as well have accepted it from the first. He, Bernard Moriarty, parish priest of St. Patrick's, highly respected throughout the diocese, was in truth a mere pawn at the mercy of the whim of his lovely housekeeper—and she a morsel cold on the plate of the late Canon Moore (God rest his soul!) at that!

Well, he would wait till she brought in his supper at eight before he confessed to her that he had lied about his sister's coming. . . . Even now he was too vain to ring for her and tell her at once.

But time passed slowly. It was now only six. Two hours to wait. Slowly and heavily, he walked across to his writing desk; he might while away the time in writing several letters in connexion with parochial matters.

This took him only till a quarter to seven. He sealed the letters up and stamped them and laid them on the table. The suspense and excitement had started his heart palpitating again; he felt he could wait no longer. After another stiff whisky he rang for Kitty. She entered, proud, half-smiling as usual.

“Yes, Father?”

“Ah, Kitty! Hm. I—er—I thought I'd better tell you” (in his calm all trace of the brogue left him) “that after mature consideration I have decided to write to my sister suggesting other arrangements. . . .”

*J. P. HOGAN*

He cleared his throat.

"Er—she will not be coming here after all."

He did not look up at her, but sat crushed, saggy, yellow-faced, broken and almost human.

She glanced at the letters on the table.

"Very well, Father. Is it for to post your letthers ye wanted me ? "

Quickly he looked up and followed her eyes to the letters. He rose and put them in his pocket. The she-devil !

"Hah ! No, thank you, Kitty. I—er—I'll post them myself on my way down to Corpus Christi. I'll be going along to see my brother Terence after supper. . . ."

She turned to go—proud, half-smiling as she had entered.

"Sure and it'll be late goin' all the way down to Corpus Christi afther supper ! " she remarked blandly.

## OSCAR LEVY

### NIETZSCHE THE POSSESSED I

Mr. Edward J. O'Brien has published through Jonathan Cape (London) a book entitled *Son of the Morning : A Portrait of Friedrich Nietzsche*. One might assume that the title means something complimentary, something which might be rendered more lucidly, "Herald of a New Dawn." But it means nothing of the kind. The book itself discloses that what is intended is "Fallen Son of the Morning," as in the apostrophe in Isaiah, XIV, 12, "How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" In this book, then, Nietzsche is Lucifer, the Fallen Angel, the angel who abused his gifts and was "brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit," and who then became what is popularly called the Devil.

Nietzsche, Mr. O'Brien contends, was, like this Fallen Angel, intelligent, but his very intelligence, his lust of knowledge, his "*libido sciendi*" (as the Church has it), destroyed him. It led him to spiritual bankruptcy comparatively early in his career. "He is bankrupt now of Schopenhauer," Mr. O'Brien says, "bankrupt of Wagner, bankrupt of himself. He had passed the torrent of his generous idealism into philology, and the philologists sneered at him. He had poured it into the Franco-Prussian War, and the new bourgeois Prussia, greasy with false elation, mocked the cause for which his regiment" (?) "had fought. He had poured it into the cause of Wagnerian music, and Wagner's music was proven false and self-seeking." But that, Mr. O'Brien argues, was not all. Another much greater guilt weighed upon Nietzsche's soul and tore his conscience to pieces.

For there is another "*libido*" denounced by Catholic moralists: the "*libido dominandi*" (the lust of power), and then, worst of all, the "*libido sentiendi*," which may be

rendered, "the lust of the senses." Nietzsche, according to Mr. O'Brien, fell a victim to this: he loved Wagner's wife, Cosima. Here we come to the core of *Son of the Morning*. Mr. O'Brien aims at showing that the alleged unhappy veneration of Cosima by Nietzsche had a profound effect on Nietzsche's philosophy. He makes out that Cosima, "the unique," is the Ariadne of Nietzsche's writings; according to him, she was the ideal woman of Nietzsche's youthful imagination, the heroic mortal who sacrificed all for love of art and the furtherance of noble ideals. Yet Nietzsche, we are told, saw this "goddess" living with Wagner in "unsanctioned and irregular wedlock." For Nietzsche, "with his Lutheran heritage, this was painful, specially after the birth of Siegfried." The contention is, in short, that Nietzsche came to loathe Wagner and all his art because Wagner was the lucky husband of Cosima. A tactless one into the bargain! For "he would boast to Nietzsche coarsely of his life with Cosima, linking his boast with taunts at Nietzsche's purity" (p. 88). And thus poor Nietzsche is pictured as suffering from the pangs of a love he dared not confess, and consequently from lack of "necessary sexual satisfaction" (p. 174). "The eternal conflict is tragically evident and lasted to the end. Nietzsche's last words, before he was taken to the asylum, were addressed to her and voiced the thwarted love of a passionate lifetime."

The whole of the eighteen volumes of Nietzsche are ransacked to support this theory. Dozens of aphorisms are turned and twisted until they "fit in" with it. The commentators of Talmud, Koran and Gospel should learn something from this dextrous interpreter of inner and hidden meanings. An especially amusing example is that about Aphorism 119 in *The Dawn of Day*, where Nietzsche, in the Freudian manner (but before Freud), speaks of dreams: "How does it happen that in one dream I enjoy inexpressible musical beauty and in another dream I soar and fly upwards with the happiness of an eagle to the furthest heights?" This, Mr. O'Brien suggests, refers to Cosima, the continual object of Nietzsche's dreams, for "Nietzsche," he says, "believed Wagner was Geyer, and he once said, 'Where there is a Geyer (vulture), an eagle (Adler) is not far off.'" (The translation is Mr. O'Brien's; he professes to know German.) Now Nietzsche really did say something like this in *The Case of Wagner*, but for a reason unconnected



with either love or Cosima. Nietzsche knew that Wagner was the illegitimate child of an actor called Geyer, and when saying that "a Geyer is already nearly an Adler" (this is the correct translation of "*ein Geyer ist beinahe schon ein Adler*"), he wished to hint that Wagner was probably of Semitic origin, for Adler is a German-Jewish name. (Nietzsche, by the way, was mistaken in this assumption, for Geyer, the name of Wagner's real father, has been found in German church registers and has been traced back through several generations.)

But what about Mr. O'Brien and his continual jumps at Cosima, of which this is but one example? What of his eternally seeing love and jealousy where there was only a conflict over art and philosophy, surely a conflict deep enough and one that grieved both parties to the utmost? How far the true Nietzsche was above Mr. O'Brien's insinuations may be gathered from *Ecce Homo*, where, in looking back upon his life, Nietzsche speaks of his friendship with Wagner as follows:

As I am speaking here of the recreations of my life, I feel I must express a word or two of gratitude for that which has refreshed me by far most heartily and most profoundly. This, without the slightest doubt, was my intimate relation with Richard Wagner. All my other relations with men I treat quite lightly; but I would not have the days I spent at Triebschen—those days of confidence, of cheerfulness, of sublime flashes, and of profound moments—blotted from my life at any price. I know not what Wagner may have been for others; but no cloud ever darkened my sky.

This passage, one of hundreds, our author has not allowed to affect his love-thesis. He has gone blithely on, as the wrapper of his book declares, to tell "for the first time in any language the true and complete story of Nietzsche's life, of his friendship with Cosima Wagner and its profound effect on his philosophy." Of the philosophy, however, we hear in fact next to nothing. Whoever will look up the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* or the *Britannica* (14th edition) can find out more about Nietzsche's message than in this book, described by the publisher as of "absorbing interest" and as "claiming to supersede all German biographies." There is nothing in it about "the Transvaluation of All Values," nothing about "The Will to Power," nothing about "Superman" or "Eternal Recurrence." It is all

## OSCAR LEVY

about love, love, love—which, by the way, seems to be its author's obsession. If it had been Nietzsche's as well, Mr. O'Brien would have found no occasion to write a book against him.

Yet even this alleged discovery of Nietzsche's secret and unhappy love is not as original as Mr. O'Brien thinks. True, the German biographers have hitherto refrained from pointing to Cosima as the muse of the poet-philosopher; and even the French author, Daniel Halévy, who certainly looked out for spicy anecdotes, had to renounce "sex appeal" in his particularly sober *Life of Friedrich Nietzsche*. But there is another Frenchman, Guy de Pourtalès, who, with his *Nietzsche en Italie*, can certainly claim to be a predecessor of Mr. O'Brien. In that book likewise we find very little philosophy and a great deal of philandering. There, too, the Cosima-Ariadne story is pushed into the foreground. But let no one accuse Mr. O'Brien of plagiarism: the two biographies and their authors are poles asunder. The French "confrère" takes Nietzsche's "affaire" lightly; he apparently loves the human touch in a heavy subject; he delights in picturesque detail, describing Cosima's dresses and her wonderful Florentine hat; he even attributes, not one sweet-heart to Nietzsche, but two, and lets Nietzsche tell his second "amie," Mademoiselle Lou Salome, the story of his first attachment thirteen years after it, on the occasion of revisiting Triebtschen—"with tears in his voice."

Surely Pourtalès wrote with an eye on the gallery, that gallery in which sit pretty ladies who are less interested in pathos than in Eros, and want to hear how the little god's power enslaved even a great philosopher. Mr. O'Brien's book, however, is not written for ladies. It has been written with an eye, not on the gallery, but on Galilee. There is a religious touch, a depressing fog, a Puritan gloom, about the story he tells. Nietzsche, for Pourtalès, is a lover; for O'Brien, a sinner. In *Son of the Morning*, Nietzsche is the Tannhäuser of medieval renown, ruined by his mad sexual cravings which were all the more fatal for having been suppressed. True, Nietzsche is not shown as entering the "Venusberg," but as careful to admire Cosima from afar—and thus as having no need of a faithful Eckart to warn him off. But we, it seems, need to be warned off Nietzsche and his ways, and for this Mr. O'Brien's book was written. He wishes to be our Eckart.

The epilogue to the book makes the purpose clear. Mr. O'Brien there looks at the world about him and finds it in despair, spiritually bankrupt and with no vision for the future. How have we sunk to such a depth? He knows, and he tells us. We have been misled because we, who once had faith in God, turned to worship man, and above all great men, whom we adore like gods. Now, even these great men—our generals, poets and sculptors, our musicians, statesmen and theologians—have not been free men, but possessed—"the nobler the man, the greater the possession!"—by a single idea: they have longed for the heaven from which they were outcasts, from which they had been driven by Michael's sword!

Mr. O'Brien supplies a long list of such "possessed people": it reaches from Michelangelo, Swift, Milton, Blake, Stendhal and Napoleon—we omit twenty other names—to Dostoievsky, Tolstoi, Ibsen, Strindberg, Rimbaud, D. H. Lawrence and Nietzsche. Nietzsche has been singled out as the frankest, clearest and ablest of all the Possessed, of all who abdicated their human freedom, who "let Lucifer enter their soul." "His life and writings embody the modern drama: the death of our civilization destroyed by the Son of the Morning."

But there is still hope: we ordinary mortals have not yet abdicated heaven too—in spite of our great seducers, in spite of Nietzsche! On this note the book ends. In reality, of course, Mr. O'Brien is defending the old religion. Yet the word "Christianity" he never utters. Why not? What, then, of the noble tradition of apologetics? Of the open, brave and tenacious defence of the Faith throughout two thousand years? *Son of the Morning* is a cautious and in some ways an unfair book. It attacks the enemy literally "below the belt." On behalf of the Faith a more open champion is certainly needed to counteract Nietzsche's "devilish" message. Surely, a great religion can still find a defender whose "heart is hot within him," who "can speak with his tongue"? Surely there must be some fight left in one of the faithful? Or must we—the infidels—taunt them with Danton's words: "*De l'audace, encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace!*"



menkes

*Drawing by Menkes*



JAMES T. FARRELL  
THE MERRY CLOUTERS

*Oh my name is Tinker Tommy.  
I'm the bum from Omaha.  
I was born in a griss mill,  
With corn meal in my jaw.  
The first job I ever had  
Was ridin' on a hack,  
Till one fine day the horse. . .*

Milt Rosensplatz had a number of the lads on the grass outside the boat-house, practising harmony. Heat was crushed over the park, and the feeble park winds, like a steam-roller. All the Merry Clouters, who were not outside giving their ears a treat, sat on the right side of the crowded, dusty Washington Park Boat-House. Down the centre of the boat-house, extending from the ticket-stall on land, back almost to the wall, was a queue of people waiting for rowboats.

Glenn Reeves, dark and wiry, with Semitic features and only eighteen-inch bell-bottoms, rose from a wicker chair and stood in the centre of the group. He friscoed, snapping his fingers, twisting his feet, and rolling his middle, while he started to sing :

*" I'm runnin' wild! I'm runnin' wild!  
I lost control. . . "*

" Comon now, Jew! Comon now, Jew! Comon now! Comon! " said Coady, the beef-red faced park blue-coat.



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Glenn clamped his trap shut and started to sit down, but Coady grabbed him by the sleeve, and pushed him towards the exit. The gang smiled defensively, and Glenn moved nonchalantly, Coady flat-footing after him, with the mutter :

“Get a move *on* ! Get a move *on*, Jew ! ”

Glenn joined the harmony boys outside.

*I'm the sheik of Ar-aby.*  
—Without a shirt—  
*Your love belongs to me-e.*  
—Without a shirt—  
*At night . . . when you're asleep,*  
—Without a shirt—  
*Into you're tent, I'll creep.*  
—Without a shirt—

Three-Star Hennessey, all sheiked out in the widest and flappiest pair of bell-bottoms in the neighbourhood, a striped tie (looking like the flag of Montenegro), and a straw katy with a red and blue band, mimicked the cop's brogue, and the gang hahah'd.

Man Bleu interrupted Hennessey's mimicry to denounce Johnny Law, the old s. b. Manuel was a tall well-built lad of eighteen or nineteen, with dark, fine and intelligent features. He would have been handsome but for his nose. He was apparently insensitive to the atrociousness of his outfit—a tight-fitting dago suit with a hick cut, the sleeves too short, the trousers tight at the bottom, not touching the tips of his old but carefully shined tan oxfords. The outside pockets of his coat were long, wide, and sensationally cut. He wore purple socks, a yellowish tan pongee shirt with a low white, stiff collar, and a stringy brown tie. His hat was a seven-fifty straw, darkish, flexible, and mashed in a number of places. Man was the president of the Merry Clouters Club.

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"Let's the bunch of us get him sometime," said Bob Connell, the sixteen-year old cake, who didn't have to shave his cherry cheeks.

*It's three o'clock in the morning,  
We've danced the whole night through;  
And daylight soon will be dawning;  
Just one more dance with you.  
Ding-dong, ding-dong, there goes the three o'clock chimes,  
Chiming, rhyming, I could just keep right on dancing,  
forev —*

"Well, I know something sweeter than getting put in the jug, trying to beat up cops," said runty Three-Star Hennessey.

"Three Star, you never think uh nothing but gash," said Young Rocky Kansas. He was caked out in a black suit, with wide, not bell-bottom, trousers, a soft-collared pongee shirt and a black knit tie. Like most of the others, his hair was well glued with vaseline and carefully parted in the middle.

"Well, if you ask me, I turn nothing down," said Three-Star.

"Not even dark-meat," said glassy-eyed Swede Larson. The Swede was good-humoured, and whenever he laughed at his own statements, it was infectious—everybody guffawed. Then he would be told, "Swede, yere a card."

"Hell, didn't you guys know that Hennessey loves dark shanks," said Young Rocky.

"Big Boy, don't you all speak uh mah pok chops," said Hennessey, imitating a Negro.

Andy Le Gare broke into one of his idiotic fits of laughter and nearly rolled off his chair. Hennessey said he better get himself attended to and Andy rose and let a mule-driving right fly at Three Star, but the latter ducked and stepped backwards. They told

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Andy to can it. He called Hennessey pig-pen Irish. Hennessey retorted about the froggy French.

Bob Connell bemoaned the fact that Washington Park was no longer a place for white men. He said, "Why, a decent girl can't come over here at night."

"No, not with the niggers and the purse-snatchers like Three Star around," said Young Rocky.

"But no kiddin', the Merry Clouters ought to become a vigilance committee and run all eightballs out of the park. This is a white man's park."

"And it'll stay that way as long as the Merry Clouters have anything to do with it," said Young Bill Heeny, the dirty-faced, short-panted mascot of the bunch.

*Sweet Adeline (Sweet Adeline)  
Sweet Adeline (Sweet Adeline)  
For you dear heart (for you dear heart)  
    alone I pine (alone I pine)  
In all my dreams (in all my dreams) your  
    fair face beams. . . .*

The guys barbered, and Hennessey gave an anatomical description of his last pick-up. He concluded by smacking his lips, and saying, "The nearer the bone, the sweeter the meat."

The lads talked of their fights—Bob Connell of the time he pulled his fictitious gat on some bad eggs from Sixty-Third and Halsted, Man Bleu of the time he was thrown from a freight car by the dirty-fighting micks from Fifty-Fifth and Wentworth, when they got him from behind, and Young Rocky of the Sunday afternoon dance at Teresa Dolan's dancing school, which he had broken up by starting a fight.

*With some one like you,  
A pal good and true,  
I'd like to leave it all behind  
And go and find*

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*Some place that's known to God alone.  
Just a spot to call our own.  
We'll find perfect peace....*

Rose and Grace, the two broads from Fifty-Fifth, who were always putting out for charity, came around, and sat demurely by themselves. Half the guys thronged round them, and they talked casually.

Cakey Lewie Leiter, the blond Jew boy, happened it. He wore a darkish gray suit, with twenty-two inch bells, a gray broadcloth shirt, collar attached, a tie with slanting black and blue stripes, a handkerchief in his lapel, a flower in his buttonhole, a gray fedora, and patent leather pumps.

"Here's the patent leather kid," said Young Rocky.

"Where yuh steppin-tuh-night?" hollered over Ellsworth Lyman, who was with a strange beetle.

"Boy, I'm steppin' high," said Lewie mysteriously. He said that he had a date with a keen number, but would divulge nothing about her, except that she was hot stuff, and lived on the other side of the park. They razzed him, and then he friscoed for them, rolling his eyes and his middle, and snapping his fingers, while he sang :

*"I'll be there to get you in a push-cart, honey,  
Better be ready 'bout half-past eight.  
Now dearie, don't be late;  
I wannuh be right there when the band starts  
playin'.  
Tickle toe, and shimmy too,  
I wannuh dance right outuh my shoes,  
When they play the jelly-roll blues,  
To-marrah night... at the Darktown Strutter' Ball  
... an' that ain't all-I."*

The guys sat around, gassed with the broads, talked, smoked.

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Outside, the harmony boys persisted :

*One grasshopper jumped upon another grasshopper's  
back....  
and they were ony ony foo-oolin....*

Bill Heeney had gone outside with the harmony boys. He dashed in, and spread the good word that there were a couple of jiggs outside who ought to get smacked. The gang got important, and Man yelled :  
“ Merry Clouters ahoy ! ”

They scrambled outside and collected the singers. Milt protested that they broke up his concert.

“ Lissen, Rosey, the Merry Clouters got serious business ahead. It's up to us to keep the coons outtuh this park, or one day they'll be floodin' it, and then we'll all get our throats slit with razors,” said Young Rocky.

“ The niggers killed poor Clackey Metz in the race riots of 1919, and I fought against them, even if I was ony a kid. I know 'em,” said Andy.

“ Well, they're gonna pay. The Merry Clouters ain't foolin',” said Ellsworth.

“ Come on, gang, or they'll get away,” said Man.

They asked which way the jiggs had gone, and Bill said “South.”

The niggers turned out to be a lone young Negro walking round the bed of the lagoon. Man told them to go quietly, but the guys raised a war cry, shouting that the Merry Clouters were coming. The confused Negro ran across the grass, in the direction of the western end of the park. He was caught in the small circle where the path from the boat-house to the Fifty-Eighth Street entrance and a gravel walk converged. In the centre of the circle was a small pond and fountain. The Negro begged to be let off, pleading that he had done nothing. He let out a

yell for help, but was told that if he tried that again, he would get it twice as bad. He stood in the centre of the gang, docile, almost quaking, his eyeballs white. The guys talked at him and debated what to do with him. While they stood there, Bill Heeney spat tobacco juice in the shine's face.

"Don you all do dat, white boy."

"Why ? "

"Listen, nigger, what the hell business you got in a white man's park ? " asked Young Rocky.

"I wasn't doin' nothing tuh nobody. I was jus' walkin'."

"Well, after this, you walk in yere own neighbourhood, eight-ball, or else you can be the guest to yere own funeral," said Bill Heeney.

"Yeh, black boy, did you ever go home in uh coffin ? " asked Andy.

They frisked him and found a rusty knife with a cracked pearl-handle. They knew he was carrying it to slash a white man and cursed him.

Suddenly he clipped away across the grass. The mob went after him and Andy brought him down with a flying tackle. He was dazed. As he got up, Young Rocky clipped him on the jaw. He shook his head and then begged again for mercy. Glenn Reeves slapped his puss. Hennessey spat in his eye. Connell moved forward to swing on him, and the Negro impulsively put his hands up to guard. Bob stepped backed, and warned them to watch out for a razor. Ellsworth Lyman got behind him, on his hands and knees, and Gillen gave him a shove. He tumbled over Lyman. On getting up Lyman kicked him, saying, "Hey, what's the idea of tumbling over me. Huh ? "

Everybody laughed.

Bob Connell gave the Negro a timid kick. He got up and quickly, one after the other, Lyman, Andy,



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and Young Rocky smacked his puss. He went down again, his lip bleeding. Man told them to stop it. Then Bill Heeney suggested dumping him in the fountain.

The black boy was carried by his legs and shoulders to the fountain, beside which he had been caught. Ceremoniously he was baptized, the mock ritual ending with the shoving of him head first into the pond. The guys ranged round him. The inside was slippery and sloped downwards. In attempting to get out, the Negro slid on his face again and again, and it was very funny.

When he did reach the edge, Bill Heeney gave him a shove, saying, "Black boy, this hyeah is the fust bath you all's had in years."

They all laughed.

"Don't catch cold," said Swede Larson, and they all laughed.

Grown-ups walking in the park stopped to look on. When some one protested, he was told that niggers were getting too gay and this was the only way a man's park and decent white girls could be protected. He stayed to watch.

Hennessey broke off a long switch in the shrubbery and began making the shine dance in the water. How the guys laughed! But they wearied of the sport in time and let the black boy out. He was told to be on his way and not to come back if he placed any value in his black hide.

The guys returned to the boat-house laughing and bragging. All but Man who walked alone. He said he was ashamed of himself, and that after this the Merry Clouters would give everybody a chance to fight one of the gang in a fair scrap.

But, "Niggers are treacherous. Didn't that guy have a knife?" said Bob Connell.

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"No one gets away with anything on the Merry Clouters," said Bill Heeney.

Before entering the boat-house the guys gave nine rousing cheers for the Merry Clouters.

Lewie's keen date turned out to be a flop. The beetle two-timed him. He walked along Fifty-Fifth Street towards the Park, thinking up what to tell the guys. There was a gang on the corner of Fifty-Fifth and Ellis, the tough Ellises and Kenwoods, led by the Battling Musics, who were feared all over the South Side.

"Hello, cake ! "

"I say, cake, don't trip over them there skirts uh yours."

"I hear you callin', yoo-hoo."

"Hey, yuh sing in uh church ? "

"*It's* out struttin' tuh-night."

*Oh here he comes, oh there he goes,  
All dressed up in his Sunday clothes,  
But oh how sweet to smell the stink uh his dirty feet.*

The gang made other cracks. Some waved handkerchiefs at Lewie. He walked more swiftly. He broke into a run. The guys made a noise as if chasing him. They stood watching him leg it, and laughed. He hailed a cab, and had the drive speed to the Washington Park Boat-House.

In the grass outside the boat-house, Milt Rosenplatz was telling Glenn to can the dynamiting, while Glenn sang :

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*He sighed and whispered Oogie Oogie Wah Wah.  
She sighed, and answered Oogie Oogie Wah Wah too.*

"Where's the bunch?" asked Lewie, dramatically.

"The rest uh the guys are inside. They just gave the merry clouts to a nigger."

"I want' em. I almost got socked over at Fifty-Fifth and Ellis. The gash I had, and I been makin' it, is the steady uh one of the Ellises or Kenwoods, and they laid for me, but I took to my heels. If they'd caught me, they'd have given me the clouts. They shagged me and flung rocks at me too, but I hailed a cab, and that saved my neck. Come on, there's no time to lose. They might be on the way over here after us already."

"Did you spot your pants?" asked Milt.

"Be yourself. This is no time for foolin'. It's serious," said Lewie.

He dashed into the boat-house and told his story to the guys inside. Young Rocky said, "Come on, Merry Clouters!" and led the way out.

The others did not follow. Milt said it was all foolish.

"Lissen, this is no singin' society," stuttered Andy.

Bob Connell said, "Gee, I wish I lived nearer so I could get my gat!"

"Well, there's going to be lot uh lads from the other side uh the Park that wished they never got tangled with the Merry Clouters," said Ellsworth Lyman.

Man took charge and led the gang outside, as they shouted, "Merry Clouters ahoy!"

Man shouted for silence. He sent Bill Heeney back to the pool-room at Fifty-Eighth Street for any reinforcements he might find. He sent seven guys

into the bushes for clubs and what not in the way of weapons.

He said, "But get me straight, fellahs. We want to fight 'em with our fists, and we want these only for self-defence."

"Well, I wish I had my gat," said Bob Connell.

The fellows came back from the bushes with sticks, branches, and empty whisky bottles.

Swede Tarsen dropped his findings on the grass, and rubbed his hands dry, as he said, "Gooley!"

Everybody laughed. "You crazy Swede!"

"Them must be the ones Hennessey used," said Bill Heeney.

"Save 'em, Hennessey. They might come in handy again," Swede said, and they laughed.

"Come on, you guys, this is serious business," crabbled Bob Connell.

Bill Heeney returned with five more lads. A few more from Sixty-First Street joined them.

"Let's go, Merry Clouters!" said Young Rocky, making a second dash. No one followed him, and he returned.

Manuel sent Bill Heeney ahead as far as the conservatory to scout. He outlined a plan of battle. The conservatory was a good place to hide and wait. On the West Side, there were two sets of steps that led down from the terrace to the lawns and gardens. Most of the boys could mass in the bushes by the south steps that were near the Administration Building, while an ambush group could wait in the shrubbery by the north bushes. Then, if no one came, a few scouts could go ahead, and attract the attention of the Ellises, and decoy them over to the conservatory.

It was voted a dandy plan, and the Clouters marched forth as to battle. The lads from Sixty-

First Street sang an alliterative ditty, about the boys from Sixty-First who would rather perform a certain function than fight. Milt started *Onward Christian Soldiers*, but they soon broke off into, *Hail, Hail, the Gang's all here!*

Young Rocky dashed back to the boat-house to say good-bye to Rose and Grace, and caught up again. Man and Andy led, and he walked between them, an arm on each of their shoulders. Bill came back with news of nothing stirring. They divided forces at the conservatory steps and waited in the quiet, while the moon and dew mist fell over the summer night, and the street-cars from nearby Cottage Grove Avenue sent off remote grunts and grindings.

Man, Andy, and Swede went forward as decoys. They went to Fifty-Sixth and Ellis, and slowly started down Ellis. A cripple came along, whom they know to belong to the bunch. Swede grabbed him and said, "Where yuh from, lad?"

The cripple talked dumbly, and Swede held him more tightly. Man said to leave the guy go, and issued a challenge to the Ellises and Kenwoods, stating the place where the Merry Clouters awaited them. The cripple hobbled along towards Fifty-Fifth. Swede said :

"He's the bastard who put his heel in Moriarty's eye, that time the Kenwoods beat up on a few lads from Fifty-Fifth and Wentworth. He ought to get smacked, even if he is crippled."

They watched, until they noticed a perceptible stir among the lads on the corner of Fifty-Fifth and Ellis. They moved down closer to get an estimation of their numbers, and Andy yelled, "Come on over to the Washington Park conservatory, you sons of bitches, and fight!"

The lads heard. Andy, Man, and Swede ran, and

joined the Merry Clouters, breathless, and with the good news that "they were coming." Swede went down with the group at the north steps. Man and Andy remained with the main force.

They waited. The wind shifted in the trees. Street-cars clanked back and forth along Cottage. They heard the grinding and humming of motor-cars on the Drive behind them. They heard their heartbeats and their breath.

"Be quiet now. Everybody remember he's a Merry Clouter, and Merry Clouters fight until they're laid out cold," said Man.

"You said it," said Young Rocky.

Long seconds of waiting. The moon slanted over grass and flowers. There were a few far echoes of quiet human voices and strange stirrings in the bushes. Glenn Reeves said shakily, "We got a fight on our hands."

"Keep your pecker up," said Andy, his face lit with ecstatic anxiety.

"I'm just aching to bust some of 'em," whispered Young Rocky.

"And ain't I," said Lewie, as he clumsily dusted his trousers with a handkerchief.

Andy whispered that it was just like being in France waiting for the Germans to attack.

"Well, they'll get what the Germans did," said Eddie Eastwood.

Man crouched. Billy Evans, the tough guy from Sixty-First, was beside him. Suddenly, he looked to his right. Billy Evans was gone.

They heard the noises of the other gang approaching behind the bushes on the other side. The noises grew louder.

"Gee-zus, guys, they got gats," said Bob Connell.



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A wave of fear passed over the bushes. One by one shadows slunk out, and across the driveway and the hills, and on towards the boat-house. Then there was a large batch—a whole group of fugitives.

The Ellises and Kenwoods came in sight. They marched across to the conservatory, yelling challenges to battle.

Andy and Man looked behind them. They saw Bill Heeney, and empty bushes. Mumbling curses, Man rushed forward with Andy, and young Bill followed.

Andy picked out the biggest guy in the Ellises bunch, and said, "Gimme a fair fight, and I'll take you on."

Man hastily said, "Our bunch are all yelluh bastards. Give us a fair fight, and we'll let you pick our men."

The audacity of the move saved them.

The fellow Andy had picked out was Bill MacDonald, who had lived on the West Side of the park. He'd been a goof then, but had sprung up like a sturdy tree. He was tough and had height, reach, and weight on Le Gare. They slugged, neither backing ground, a fair, vicious fight.

Eight of the Kenwoods, led by the cripple, scouted in the bushes. They found Swede, alone, by the north steps. They grabbed him and the cripple said, "That's the guy."

He hauled off on Swede. Swede got three more quick belts in the puss. He went down. He was pulled to his feet by the hair, and he got three more smacks. He staggered back, and a brutal wallop between the eyes toppled him backwards. He lay there dazed. The cripple bent down and clipped his jaw. Then he put his heel in Swede's eye, kicked him in the head, and the ribs. Kicks and blows were

rained on Swede until he was unconscious. As they left, the cripple pumped his knee into Swede's guts for good measure.

Andy and Billy fought an even fight for twenty minutes; Billy had a shiner, Andy a split lip. Once, when the Ellises and Kenwoods yelled as if they were going to interfere, Billy stopped the fight, and demanded that no one else touch Andy. They slugged and bruised. Finally it was called a draw, and they shook hands.

Man said, "Now I'm ready!"

The other guys said they were ready to shake hands with two lads with guts. They called it quits. They shook, and the Ellises and Kenwoods went back to their hang-out.

Man, Andy and Bill, cursing, and disappointed, started back. They spotted the figure by the north steps. They approached, and saw it was Swede.

Andy was all for going after them. Man was too, but he knew they'd have to do it with a gang.

Man and Andy carried Swede back. As they moved slowly, others joined them. They seemed to appear like spirits suddenly come to life, many with sticks and clubs in their hands. There was cursing, and bragging, and threats of revenge hurled to the sky. And every one talked of what he had done in his private encounter with some big bastard from the other gang. Rocky walked beside Man and Andy who led the procession with limp, lifeless Swede on their backs.

Man noticed Young Rocky. His clothes were unspotted, his hair unmussed.

The cortege moved noisily forwards. Bod Connell slunk into the bushes, mashed his hand against a tree trunk, dirtied his face, and circulated amongst the gang showing his bruised mitt. They marched

gloomily past the boat-house, and on out of the Park. They laid Swede, unconscious and his face battered so that it was unrecognizable on a pool-table in the pool-room by the Fifty-Eighth Street Elevated Station.

Man stepped towards the lavatory. Young Rocky stopped him. The latter's hair was mussed, his face and arms were smeared with dirt, his shirt was torn, his coat crumpled under his arm, his trousers and his shoes were liberally splotted with dust.

"We'll get 'em next time," said Young Rocky.

Man didn't answer.

He and Andy took Swede to a doctor. The others hung round talking, and Bill Heeney went to the doctor's office, and returned with the news that Swede was badly battered, but there was nothing serious.

"He'll be revenged," said Eddie Eastwood.

"Wait till I get my gat," said Bob Connell.

When the pool-room had closed, Young Rocky, Milt, Bob Connell, and Ellsworth Lyman stood outside talking.

"You know what Lewie Leiter did?" said Young Rocky.

"What?"

"He stood in the bushes with a club, and as guys from the other gang appeared he beaned them, and then when they were too many he took to his heels, and went flyin' through the bushes, and as he ran, he kept brushing his pants with a handkerchief."

They laughed.

They stood there talking about who they could get to vote for Young Rocky, so Man would be ousted as president of the Merry Clouters, and they decided they could muster a majority. Milt, who had stood by listening, suggested that they go over to the park and practise some harmony.

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They sat by the bench near the drinking fountain at the Fifty-Eighth street entrance. The first song they sang was :

*When you come to the end of a perfect day,  
And you sit alone with your thoughts—  
While the chimes ring out with a carol gay—  
For the joy that the day has brought;  
Do you think what the end of a perfect day  
Can mean to a tired heart ?*

*When the sun goes down with a flaming ray  
And the dear friends have to part.*

They saw Lewie Leiter and Three-Star Hennessy stroll out of the park with two nice beetles.

## THE FLYING COLUMN

**CHARLES** We rejoice that the present craze for re-  
**GIDE** trenchment—which, if it became universal,  
would effectually strangle any economic  
revival—has not prevented the appearance in different  
countries of some new periodicals. In America Mr. Richard  
R. Smith has put out a monthly broadsheet edited by  
Mr. George Jean Nathan and three or four others: *The  
American Spectator*. In Paris M. Emmanuel Berl has with  
the co-operation of M. Gallimard launched the weekly  
*Marianne*, and we have at last had two numbers of *Esprit*,  
the monthly review with which M. Emmanuel Mounier was  
big for so many months. From Cambridge (Eng.!) has  
sprouted the quarterly entitled *Scrutiny*. We wish we could  
praise these additions to the mass of existing periodical read-  
ing-matter as wholeheartedly as we welcome their advent.  
But, alas! so far that is impossible. Apparently Mr. Nathan  
and his friends seek in *The American Spectator* to scout con-  
vention conventionally. M. Berl's weekly calls for no com-  
ment. As for *Scrutiny*, we believe we shall be doing its  
general aim and attitude no injustice if we single out as  
typical the following remark dropped by Mr. F. R. Leavis  
in No. 2: "Some who a good while ago formed the habit  
of taking the *Criterion* seriously, now, when they compare  
the obituary attention given to Harold Monro with that  
which was given to Lawrence, feel a kind of final depres-  
sion." No doubt, that Mr. Leavis, who is, we are told, a  
Cambridge don, and hence influential with the young, should  
be finally depressed is a thundering shame. Youth needs  
cheerful people about. But we grieve the less that, final as he  
declares his depression to be, he must, we feel, soon recover  
the good spirits which the rest of us, at least for the reason  
he gives, have never lost. For, although of course the  
defence of *The Criterion* is no business of ours, why that  
quarterly should have devoted a whole article to Harold

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Monro and only a share in an "interleaf" to D. H. Lawrence seems to us perfectly obvious. Monro on the one hand was a leading member of the *Criterion* cénacle, and on the other hand he had gifts which, underrate them who may, the literary world at large did not fully appreciate. It was thus eminently *The Criterion's* business to deliver a funeral oration over his coffin. But Lawrence, whether one admires him or not, was a big public figure. An article in *The Criterion* on Lawrence at this time could have been merely one more literary gabbler's opinion of Lawrence, and of such opinions we have had a surfeit. In our view, if the periodical press of both England and America is now in a greater state of depression than business, and that is undeniable, it is because the writers for that press imagine that they are called upon to express an opinion upon what everybody is giving an opinion about. For our part, we insist on praising no periodical unless it dares to be different. We see no point in two or more periodicals if they are all to say the same thing. Especially as in saying the same thing, they usually all omit to say anything that matters. A man whose death should have been the occasion of an informative article in the English or American periodical press is the late Charles Gide, not only a leading economist, but one of the most remarkable human beings of our time. To date, however, we have noticed no such article.

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**L'ESPRIT** The word *Esprit*, which has been made the  
**LOURD** name of the new French monthly, is equivocal. It may mean "spirit" or "mind" or "wit." To be frank, we have not found in the first number of *Esprit*—the second has appeared too late for us to examine it—any signs of wit. It contained two articles on Russian Communism. The one was an enthusiastic account of a visit to Leningrad. It told us how the tramway-cars there are crowded and yet the people are all good-humoured. For a moment we felt strongly pro-Bolshevist, and then we remembered that in Paris also the tramway-cars and omnibuses are crowded and the people are all good-humoured. The other, by Nicolas Berdiaev, argued that the world must choose between Christianity and Com-



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munism. Dean Inge said the same thing years ago more pithily. *Esprit* No. 1 also contained an interminable article by M. Mounier himself entitled "Refaire la Renaissance." We need hardly say that we do not believe that (a) if the Renaissance could be repeated deliberately, it could be through the birth of a new review; (b) the Renaissance could be repeated deliberately; and (c) the Renaissance could be repeated at all. The only item which held our attention in the first number of *Esprit* was, in the final pages, a collection of extracts from newspapers. Those about M. Coty were in particular amusing. But that it publishes amusing extracts from the daily press is an insufficient excuse for the existence of a monthly review. We shall watch further issues of *Esprit* most attentively.

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**THE FUTILE** One obituary notice of Boni de Castellane, who died in October, declared  
**GRANDEE** that his lavish entertainments during his period of opulence were in no way akin to those freak dinners given during the first decade of the century in America. The would-be *distinguo* strikes us as hypocritical. The fact is that Boni de Castellane was a futile grandee. The impoverished descendant of a great house, he married millions. On his own confession, he considered, as did Curzon, that he was marrying beneath him. Yet all he could do with the treasure thereupon at his command was to make himself a spectacle of idle extravagance. On one occasion he gave an evening party of which the cost, it is said, was \$60,000. However, it is a delicate matter to decide how far he or, say, Robert de Montesquiou (so greatly admired by that clever bore Proust) was typical of his times. It would be rash also to suppose we shall not see his like again. Just now, with books like *Only Yesterday*, *Just the Other Day*, and Morand's *1900*, people are being led to look upon the pre-War era as unique and as utterly dead and buried. But we have been reading Anthony Hamilton's *Mémoires du Comte de Gramont*, and the taste for idle extravagance seems to have been even more pronounced in the days of Charles II than in those before the War. Yet, in Hamilton's pages, Gramont is made infinitely more attractive than

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Boni in his own memoirs. Gramont was brave and exceedingly witty and he had irresistible charm, and on marriage he settled down—more or less. The love of display is the same as ever, but we may justifiably suppose that aristocracy has decayed.

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**CARROTS,** We implore some philanthropic market-  
**PLEASE!** gardener on Long Island or in Westchester County to bestow a large bunch of carrots each upon Mr. Louis Bromfield, the accomplished novelist, and upon Mrs. Isabel Paterson, the delightful "I.M.P." of the New York *Herald-Tribune*. Mr. Bromfield deserves his bunch for contending that there is a rhythm in writing which should be called American and that its inventor is Gertrude Stein. And although we applaud Mrs. Paterson for saying that "Gertrude Stein's babblings are infantile rather than mystical," we insist she too shall have her carrots for continuing: "To be short about it, they" [the aforesaid babblings] "haven't any rhythm at all, but 'time,' the maddening beat of a metronome"; for quoting Burton Rascoe to the effect that Mark Twain was the first to employ an American idiom in a work of genius, namely *Huckleberry Finn*, and adding that, although idiom and rhythm are not identical (*sic!*), Mark Twain "also wrote in the American rhythm of his period"; and for instancing Elinor Wylie's sonnets in *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, the "queer old tune called *The Arkansaw Traveller*" and Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* as all being written in the "pure American rhythm."

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**THE** It should, we feel, give satisfaction to all  
**NORMANDIE** who are alive to the romance of the sea that the world's biggest ship, the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique's new liner, one thousand feet in length and of 75,000 tons displacement, which was launched at Saint-Nazaire at the end of October, should have been christened Normandie. There were proposals to name her Président Paul Doumer or Benjamin Franklin. Both, fortunately, were defeated. It is true that for the name Président Paul Doumer a precedent existed. A vessel of the Transatlantique's fleet launched in 1864 was named Impé-

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ratrice Eugénie. But a more recent tradition was, we consider, much better. When first we took an interest in crack steamships—at the beginning of the century—the Transatlantique's service between Havre and New York was assured by La Lorraine, La Savoie and La Touraine. The foundering in mid-ocean of La Bretagne was still fresh in people's memories, and, if we recollect aright, a La Normandie had quite recently been withdrawn. The next addition to the line's North Atlantic fleet was that fine vessel, La Provence. Those were all splendid names, rich in territorial and historical associations, absolutely French. Their bestowal upon such ships had a fitness which could not be improved upon. Nevertheless, a change of practice ensued. There came the France and, after the War, the Paris. Both are excellent ships, especially the Paris, but we have always felt they should have had other names. Happily, after that, tradition reasserted itself. The name Ile de France was a find, but the liner so known was very nearly called Versailles. A narrow escape! Now, with the naming of Normandie on top of the naming of Ile de France we are confident, even though the article has been dropped, that the connexion between the old French provinces and the Transatlantique's express liners to and from New York is once again properly established. And talking of the provinces of France, another member of the Transatlantique fleet was Le Roussillon. Ships are mortal, and, if the launching of a great vessel like Normandie is an inspiring sight, any liner's end is infinitely melancholy. In the spring of last year, we caught sight of Le Roussillon in the bay at Hendaye. She was still riding at anchor, but more than half dismantled. One funnel and half the other had gone, and great chunks from her hull. "They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them."

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Eugene N. Knight, 38-30, 99th Street, Corona, Long Island, New York, U. S. A., will be very grateful for information about an English translation of *G. Savonarola aus grossen Theils Handschriftlichen Quellen* Reimer Berlin 1836. He hopes these words will attract the notice of publishers, librarians, and university professors.